



MINNESOTA EDUCATOR

A publication for the members of Education Minnesota

March 2017

From exclusionary to restorative

Education Minnesota's latest EPIC paper looks at the reason why educators are pushing for more trauma-informed restorative practices when it comes to handling student discipline. The paper's topic of school climate and student interventions was a passion project for the nine educators from throughout the state who helped put the paper together.

Read more on **page 3** about the shift from exclusionary interventions to restorative practice and how it can make a difference in classrooms across the state.

Report shows increase in state's teacher shortage

A report released at the beginning of February shows the teacher shortage in Minnesota is growing more serious.

The "2017 Report of Teacher Supply and Demand in Minnesota's Public Schools" was released by the Minnesota Department of Education and shows several trends that threaten the quality of education in Minnesota's public schools.

The Minnesota Department of Education surveyed superintendents, other district or school personnel and members of teacher preparation institutions in the fall of 2016. The state

produces a report on this topic every two years.

Major takeaways from the report include:

- The number of teachers reported as leaving their positions has increased 46 percent since 2008-09. Resignations for personal or unspecified reasons are by far the most common reason teachers leave their jobs, surpassing retirements, promotions, transfers to other schools, layoffs or terminations for performance.
- A competitive job market and low salaries for teachers are considered the two biggest barriers to retaining teachers, according to school hiring officials.
- Hiring officials report the limited number of applicants for job openings is a larger barrier to hiring qualified teachers than licensure standards.
- Schools are finding it more difficult to hire short-term and long-term substitutes than reported in recent years.
- The most difficult positions to hire continue to be in special education, math, science and rural schools.

- The number of the non-licensed "community experts" working in Minnesota schools has more than doubled from 367 in the 2011-12 school year to 861 in the 2015-16 school year. Schools may hire "community experts," who are not legally required to have a college degree, when an appropriately licensed teacher is not available.

"The shortage of qualified teachers has gone from an issue, to a problem, to a crisis, in only a few short years," said Denise Specht, president of Education Minnesota. "We are losing

too many great teachers because they can't make ends meet, they feel disrespected by politicians and they're incredibly frustrated by excessive testing and other policies that limit their ability to do the jobs they love—teaching students. At the same time, the private sector needs well-educated, hard-working people with strong communication skills—and it is willing to pay for them."

"Of all of the teachers I know, they came into this profession to support students," said Maria Le, a third-grade teacher in

Shortage, page 6

WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU!

Read the article about the growing teacher shortage in the state. Then answer the question, "What can be done to help solve the teacher shortage crisis and improve recruitment and retention of educators?" 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. Answers will appear in next month's Minnesota Educator.

Congratulations to last month's contest winner, **Tracey Branden** of Detroit Lakes. See a selection of answers to last month's question on page 2.

INSIDE THIS ISSUE...

Education Minnesota President Denise Specht discusses why public employee pensions are important for educators. **Page 2**

Members testify, lobby and push for issues as the legislative session continues. **Page 4**

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Put statute language into your collective bargaining agreement to make sure language is protected. Legal brief. **Page 11**

Join Education Minnesota's Retired program for free. Opportunities. **Page 12**

Education Minnesota continues its defense of sustainable pensions for educators

Everyone wants to be fairly and completely paid for the work they do, and everyone I know wants to retire with their health, dignity and a measure of financial security. Educators are no exception. Those might seem like obvious statements. My second-graders would probably say, “Well, duh.” But in the context of protecting the pensions of current and future educators, those are fighting words. There’s an issue at the state Capitol right now that hasn’t received much media coverage, but is very important to our profession and to public education in Minnesota. The state pension plan for teachers is due for another of one of its periodic readjustments because without a change, it can only pay about 70 percent of its projected obligations. The need for adjustments isn’t unusual; it happens every few years in response to the market and the latest actuarial information. For instance, we learned in this round that educators live longer than the general population. What is controversial is who will pay for those changes. For background, the pension plan managed by the Board of Trustees of



Denise Specht, president

the Teachers Retirement Association is paid for by working educators and their employers, usually school districts. The main expense, of course, is the guaranteed payments to retired educators. Education Minnesota supports a proposal from the board of trustees that will maintain the pension for future generations of educators while spreading around the cost of rebalancing the fund. That includes:

- Increasing the employer contribution from 7.5 percent to 9.5 percent, phased in over four years. Dedicated funding from the state would help soften the blow to district budgets.

- Retirees and future retirees accept a reduction in the annual cost-of-living adjustment from 2 percent to 1 percent for four years. The cost-of-living increase would rebound to 1.5 percent afterward.
- We believe that’s fair and probably the best deal we’re going to get in the current political climate. It doesn’t raise the employee contribution because Minnesota teachers already contribute 7.5 percent of their salaries to the pension plan, 1.5 percentage points higher than the national average. We’re resisting proposals at the Legislature that offer a much worse deal for educators, such as locking the cost-of-living adjustment at 1 percent forever, or raising the retirement age to 67. So far, we haven’t seen plans to do away with our defined pension entirely, but we’re watching for them. There are polices in Washington, D.C. and other states, all favored by Wall Street, to put the responsibility and risk of retirement security entirely on individuals. We see the more extreme plans as attacks on the retirement security of working people, something unions have negotiated into

their members’ contracts for years. We do it because pensions and dignified retirements are good for educators and our state. A pension is just a delayed payment for work already performed. The employers’ share is part of the compensation package. Our members have often accepted lower salaries because they know they will get their money back when, as an elementary teacher recently told me, we all reach that age when it gets too hard to get up from those little chairs. These pensions are just another factor that can help us attract and retain great educators, a goal that grows more important every year as the teacher shortage worsens. A recent survey found 63 percent of younger workers say a defined-benefit pension was an important factor in accepting a job. Current educators want to focus on the meaningful parts of the job, like those moments when a struggling student “gets it” or when a new lesson plan works better than you hoped. No one needs the distraction of constant worry about retirement. Pensions help districts maintain a diverse mix of educators at various points in their career, and they save taxpayers money

that might be spent training new employees. To be sure, there are educators who believe they can do better on their own. Personally, I’m not convinced. I remember too many stories from the Great Recession when the market collapsed and educators found they couldn’t afford to retire as they planned. And there are also many examples of people in the private sector who retired, outlived their savings and became a financial burden on their families in their final years. That won’t happen with the pensions for educators as they are currently structured. Pensions and retirement security are complicated issues, and I know I’ve only grazed the surface in this column. Next month’s edition of the Minnesota Educator will have more details. But I hope everyone knows Education Minnesota is advocating for compensation that will let working educators sustain their families and provide a stable pension that will last throughout their retirement. Together,

Denise

Twitter: @DeniseSpecht

What is one thing you would like to see bargained into your next contract to better support students?

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!

“I believe it is important to include specific language in the contract regarding protection of preparation and collaboration time so that teachers can be ready to deliver high-quality instruction to students.”
Melissa Williams, Education Richfield

“Quality classrooms and effective lessons require much planning. Therefore, teachers need plenty of plan/prep time so that they have adequate time to create the best learning experiences for their students. In the next contract, I would love to see uninterrupted preparation time (i.e., prep time that will not be filled up with such obligations as team meetings or staff meetings) guaranteed for teachers.”
Debbie Cain, Fridley Education Association

“I would like to see additional lanes added to our contract for additional education.”
Jill Nysse, Winona Education Association

“The most important issue we are facing would be to get full-time ESPs. It would better serve our students and our teaching staff.” *Tracey Branden, Education Minnesota Detroit Lakes Educational Support Professionals*

“I would like to see language promoting equity for traveling and elective teachers. When compared to traditional teaching positions, traveling and elective teachers sometimes have jobs that require an individual to teach more minutes per day, teach more classes in one day, teach more total students, teach larger class sizes and work in multiple schools.”
Tony Streng, Education Minnesota-Osseo

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

March 2017 – Volume 19, No. 7

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

To inquire about advertising in the Educator or on the website

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Minnesota Educator (ISSN 1521-9062) is a monthly publication. Periodicals are postage-paid at St. Paul, Minn., and additional offices. Postmaster: Send address changes to Minnesota Educator, 41 Sherburne Ave., St. Paul, MN 55103-2196.

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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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MARCH 2017 | WWW.EDUCATIONMINNESOTA.ORG

Report looks at solutions for school climate, discipline issues

Educators throughout Minnesota want their students to come to school feeling safe and ready to learn. But what kinds of things are going on in the lives of many of our students that make it difficult to learn? And what kinds of practices in our schools are making things even harder for these kids?

These are the questions that the latest paper from Education Minnesota’s Educator Policy Innovation Center wanted to answer.

“From Exclusionary to Restorative: An Intentional, Trauma-Sensitive Approach to Interrupting Racial Disparities, Reducing Violence, Strengthening Communities and Accelerating Student Learning” looks at moving a school structure from one that focuses on exclusionary interventions, like suspensions, to trauma-informed, restorative practices. The paper will be available on the Education Minnesota website in the next month.

The EPIC paper was crafted by nine educators from throughout the state and looks at the problem of how our education system has come to over-rely on exclusionary discipline in the form of suspension and expulsion and how that over-reliance on exclusion has created a school-to-prison pipeline that unfairly targets students of color and that has done nothing to mitigate violence or disruptive behavior in schools.

The paper recommends that schools move away from this myopic focus on student behavior and step back to consider the tremendous gains being made by schools that are adopting trauma-informed, restorative practices.

“We want to show our students that they matter,” said Gwen Johnson, an occupational therapist with Intermediate District 916. “Our kids know how to break relationships, but they don’t know how to keep them. They should feel a part of a community. We can fix it.”

The problem with exclusionary discipline

A 2016 Minnesota Department of Education report on dangerous weapons and disciplinary incidents found that there were 46,452 disciplinary incidents in schools across the state. Sixty-five percent of public schools in Minnesota reported at least one act of violence.

These incidents were most commonly dealt with by the student or students serving an out-of-school suspension.

Research shows that expulsions and suspensions do little in the way of teaching students to be accountable for



their behavior and nothing in the way of allowing students the opportunity to repair the harm done. They do, however, cut the student off from the structured learning environment that school provides, and too often add layers of further trauma on kids already living with high levels of toxic stress.

“As a special educator in St. Paul, I have seen many instances where students are punished, without necessarily knowing the full story or allowing their voice to be heard,” said Rebecca Wade, a teacher on leave serving as the coordinator of professional development for the Saint Paul Federation of Teachers. “Students can’t learn if they are not in school. As a system, we need to do better to welcome students into school and do everything we can to keep them there. Some of the policies in place in our education system work against this belief—and actually perpetuate the pushing out of students, particularly students of color.”

Minnesota has the sixth highest racial discipline gap when it comes to white versus African-American students. One out of every five African-American students is suspended, when one out of every 40 white students is suspended. And there is no proof these students misbehave at higher rates.

Research shows that exclusionary interventions have failed all non-white ethnic groups. One out of six, or 17 percent, of African-American students will face an exclusionary intervention, as will 8 percent of Native American students and 7 percent of Hispanic students.

Other groups disproportionately harmed by exclusionary interventions are special education students and LGBTQ youth.

“Everyone across the state is having the same issues,” said Becky Hespen, an education support professional from Osseo and president of Education Minnesota-Osseo ESPs. “What are we doing wrong? How come we’re not seeing any difference? We don’t want to unknowingly add more trauma onto kids.”

“It’s a fallacy that it is just happening in urban areas,” said Kim Davidson, an elementary teacher from Crookston. “We see it happening all the time in

our rural district.”

Trauma affects the brain, behavior

Research from the 1990s shows how prevalent childhood trauma is and what childhood trauma does to the developing brain.

When a student has been exposed to childhood trauma, their brain, nervous system and biology changes and how they react to their surroundings is drastically affected.

“The memory of our experiences is literally stored in our body, not just our brain,” said Dr. Mark Sander, a senior clinical psychologist for Hennepin County and the director of school mental health for Hennepin County and Minneapolis Public Schools, during a presentation at last year’s MEA conference. “Our biological responses might not always be a choice. Instead of asking a student ‘What’s wrong with you,’ we need to ask them ‘What happened to you?’”

“I had a high behavior student last year that was really out of my control,” said April Jackson, an elementary teacher in Roseville. “I left last year upset and defeated, because I felt like I had given my all to the student and wasn’t given the support I needed with the student to help them be successful.”

Researchers developed a scale of Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACES) to tackle how experiences affect our biology.

In a study of Minnesota students, 55 percent had an ACE score of one or higher. Of those who have one or more ACES, 60 percent have had two and 15 percent have had five or more.

“Schools, educators and families working together can minimize the impact that these experiences have on kids—which will lead to more involvement and engagement in school and more positive outcomes as students grow into adults,” said Wade.

What can schools do

The paper recommends educators receive trauma-informed training as part of their professional development.

The training equips educators to recognize the fight, flight or freeze response, including withdrawals, that students with ACE scores

WHAT IS EPIC?

Education Minnesota started the Educator Policy Innovation Center (EPIC) in 2015 to make sure that educators are at the forefront of policy decisions that impact our students, educators, schools and communities.

EPIC brings together teams of educators to provide research-proven solutions to the challenges faced in our schools. The teams of educators dig into academic research on a topic, share their own experiences and decide what policy proposals best solve the challenge being discussed. They produce an academic research paper outlining their proposals; present the papers to media, colleagues and policy makers; and communicate their proposals on social media, in opinion pieces and on blogs.

What topics does EPIC cover?

EPIC committees have covered the topics of student testing, full-service community schools, pre-K, teacher recruitment and retention and now student behavior and school climate.

Submit your ideas for future topics online at www.educationminnesota.org/advocacy/Educator-Policy-Innovation-Center/What-is-EPIC.

Why participate in EPIC?

Some of the participants of the last paper shared the following thoughts about the process:

“I would say I was surprised because of the amount of time and effort that goes into putting a paper like this together. How we as educators were able to have a voice in something that is so important to many schools throughout Minnesota. I am happy that I took this opportunity because it really has given me a voice and has gotten me to feel more comfortable in speaking my truth.”

– April Jackson, Roseville

“The process was really creative. There were full days, multiple days, of staff wanting our feedback.”

– David Wicklund, Mounds View

experience, and to understand that when a student is in that triggered response, he or she is not making conscious decisions. The training also quips educators with tools to help students with high ACE scores develop resiliency and teaching them, over time and through stable relationships, to recognize the difference between the real threats and the triggers that look like threats.

Integrating restorative practices in schools are also needed to help all students succeed.

Restorative practices in schools seek to use non-exclusionary methods as much as possible in order to hold students accountable for their behavior and hopefully prevent the behavior in the first place.

In restorative schools, time is spent early and often on community building. Circles, where discussion and understanding are key components, are often used as a regular part of the community building and maintenance. And when bad behavior starts, restorative schools focus on repairing the harm with all of the affected stakeholders.

“So many times, we hear that educators call for help, someone comes and takes a student out the room, then their back and nothing was resolved,” said Nick Faber, a science teacher in St. Paul and vice president of the Saint Paul Federation of Teachers. “In our restorative justice sites, we are hearing that there are more supports.

The kid has an opportunity to share too.”

Research has shown that trauma-informed, restorative-based interventions have:

- Reduced punitive disciplinary actions and problematic behavior over time.
- Provided greater respect for educators across racial and ethnic groups.
- Reduced the differences in the number of misconduct and defiance referrals issued to Asian, White, Latino and African-American student groups.
- Increased student connectedness.
- Improved student academic achievement, including credit accrual and progression toward graduation.
- Improved student climate.

The EPIC report recommends that in order to get there, Minnesota schools need to:

- Promote trauma-informed schools and restorative practice.
- Reduce exclusionary interventions.
- Change zero-tolerance mindsets.
- Fully-fund ongoing professional development for all staff.
- Build more community schools.
- Hire adequate student services staff, such as counselors, speech-language pathologists, social workers and nurses.

Members continue to stay engaged during session

As the 2017 legislative session continues, Education Minnesota members are participating in lobby days where they meet with their local legislators and testifying at hearings on education issues.

Bills continue to move through committees relating to tax credits for private school tuition, as well as pension reform. Gov. Mark Dayton has also released his budget, which includes funding increases

for education. See the box below for information on how you can get involved in meeting with your legislators or testifying on issues you are passionate about.



Members of Education Minnesota’s teachers of color forums spoke to the press Feb. 21 about the need for recruitment and retention of teachers of color in the state.



(Left) Sarah Spleiss, a teacher at Blaine High School, testified in front of the House higher education committee in support of efforts to provide student loan debt relief.



Roseville teacher Maria Le told the House taxes committee “We owe our students an equitable education. We need to keep money in public schools.” The committee was hearing testimony on a bill that would provide tax credits for private school tuition.



Prior Lake-Savage reading interventionists, such as LeAnn Weikle, testified on personal learning plans required for third-graders not reading at grade level.



Waubun-Ogema-White Earth Kick Start teacher Kimberly Antonsen testified in support of the universal pre-K funds in Gov. Mark Dayton’s budget.

DeVos brings uncertainty to world of public education

Millions of emails, thousands of calls show solidarity among educators, public across the country

In the closest confirmation vote in Senate history, 50 U.S. senators plus Vice President Mike Pence on Feb. 7 confirmed Betsy DeVos as education secretary. The confirmation process of DeVos left many educators confused, but mobilized many others. Educators across the country made it clear to their senators that they consider DeVos dangerously unqualified to lead our public schools. “Millions of people emailed their senators in opposition to Betsy DeVos’ vision for public schools and tens of thousands made phone calls,” said Education Minnesota President Denise Specht after the confirmation was announced. “We want to thank all the Minnesotans who stood up to defend accessible and accountable public education. We’re all in this together.” Education Minnesota’s social media posts about DeVos had record levels of engagement. The outreach and engagement swelled to record levels at the national unions as well. Educators, parents and allies sent more than 1 million letters via the National

Education Association’s activism site and made 80,000 phone calls in four weeks, urging senators to vote no. Opposition swelled nationally, and senators reported that the three days ending last week resulted in the most calls into the Capitol switchboard in history. “In my years as a public education advocate, I have never witnessed this level of public outcry,” said NEA President Lily Eskelsen García. “The nomination has touched a raw nerve not only with public education advocates like me but with the general public as well.” DeVos is a Michigan businesswoman with no experience in public education or government administration, but with a long history of using her wealth to support anti-public school policies in her home state of Michigan and donating millions to the Republican Party. In Michigan, DeVos fought for tax cuts for the wealthy at the expense of public schools, for vouchers that divert taxpayer funds from public schools to private schools and to allow for-profit charter school corporations to operate with

no accountability while being funded by taxpayers. In 2001, she founded the Great Lakes Education Project to advance charter schools in Michigan after her family had spent almost \$5.8 million on a losing initiative to establish statewide school vouchers. In 2011, DeVos family members and the Great Lakes project lobbied successfully to lift a cap on the number of charter schools in the state. About 80 percent of the charter schools in Michigan are operated by for-profit companies, with little to no oversight from the state. In total, DeVos and her organizations have spent at least \$33.5 million to support public school privatization efforts. Specht hopes the member engagement and focus on the department of education’s actions will not fade. “There are many ways members can become more involved at the state and national level when it comes to education and social justice issues,” she said. Check out the “how to get involved” box on this page to find ways to stay informed and take action.

GET ACTIVE, STAY INFORMED THIS SESSION

- Lobby days**
All local unions or subject area groups can sign up for a lobby day. Education Minnesota will set up appointments with the legislators in your area. Substitute, mileage and food reimbursements are available. For more information, go to www.educationminnesota.org/advocacy/at-the-legislature/details-on-lobby-days.
- Meet with legislators**
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. If locals want to schedule a formal meeting with the legislator while they are in the district, contact your Education Minnesota field staff.
- Raise your voice by testifying at a hearing**
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 and get you on the agenda.
- 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. Check it out at www.educationminnesota.org/policyactioncenter.
- Read the Capitol Connection e-newsletter**
Every Monday during the legislative session, Education Minnesota sends an e-newsletter called Capitol Connection, which summarizes the most recent actions affecting public education at the Legislature, and looks ahead to upcoming activities. 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.
- Sign up to receive alerts on national issues from AFT, NEA**
The American Federation of Teachers and National Education Association both have webpages and e-newsletters that allow members to stay informed on national education issues. Visit their political action pages at www.aft.org/action and www.nea.org/home/19546.htm.

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Shortage *from page 1*

Roseville. “They are not given the support to fuel their passion, so they leave the profession. I had seven jobs to get myself through college. Now, I have two jobs outside of teaching, just to keep me in the profession.”

One of the positive findings in the report is that teachers of color now make up 4.23 percent of Minnesota teachers and nearly 8 percent of newly licensed teachers are teachers of color.

Le, an Asian-American woman, said that our state’s achievement gap and the lack of support from the state is drastically affecting our recruitment and retention, especially of people of color.

“If we’re not graduating our students of color, they are not going to college and getting into the teaching profession. And if they do, there’s a good chance they will leave in the first five years,” she said.

Specht hopes this report will push lawmakers to do something about the problem.

“Districts won’t hold on to great new teachers if those teachers keep coming up short every month after paying for health insurance, housing, living expenses and their student loans,” Specht said. “More experienced teachers won’t stick around if they can’t afford to save

for college for their own kids. And all educators are tired of being ignored on school policies and crushed by redundant paperwork, especially in special education, and increasing demands with decreasing supports. Everyone loses when passionate and professional educators are forced to choose between their obligations to their families and the responsibilities they feel for Minnesota’s students.”

In 2016, Education Minnesota’s Educator Policy Innovation Center released a report called “Smart Solutions to Minnesota’s Teacher Shortage: Developing and Sustaining a Diverse and Valued Educator Workforce.”

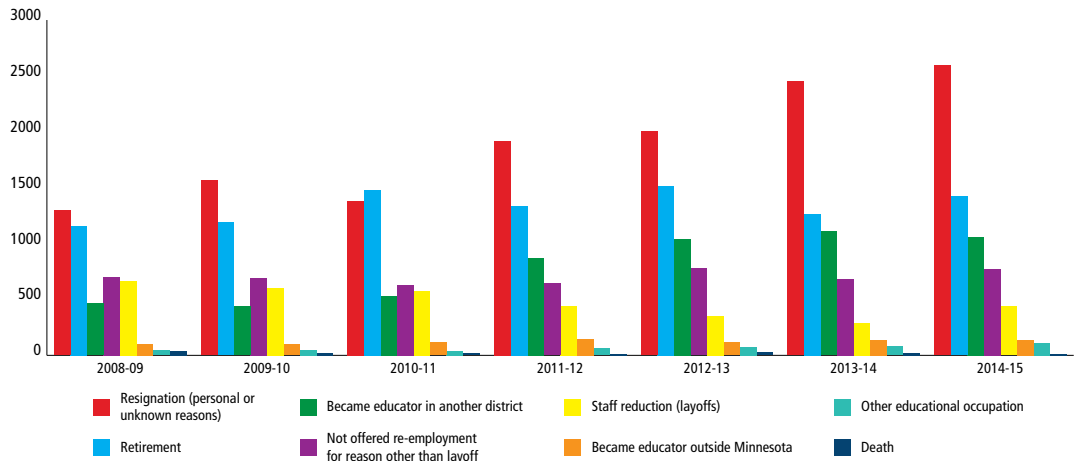
The team of educators from throughout the state looked at why the teacher shortage is taking place and potential solutions.

Le, who was part of the team, said that it is up to educators to fight for these solutions.

“Educators must continue to keep at the forefront the moral imperative of why you came into the profession,” she said. “We need to recognize the power of our collective and organize. If we continue the pursuit forward, we must eventually be heard.”

In order to retain high-

Resignations from education top reason teachers leave



Source: 2017 Teacher Supply and Demand Report prepared by the Minnesota Department of Education

quality educators, Education Minnesota recommends:

- Increase support for teacher autonomy so teachers are empowered to meet the changing needs of their students.
- Provide additional financial benefits to all current educators with additional incentives for educators of color.
- Invest in quality professional development for all educators. Provide additional resources to allow educators of color to seek professional development for their unique needs.
- Decrease the paperwork and unnecessary stress on educators who work with students with special needs.

- Give more attention to the mental health and well-being of all educators. Minnesota must give particular support for the well-being of educators working in high-needs schools. To recruit a diverse and talented teaching force, the report recommends:
- Creating programs to promote the teaching profession to high school students, with an emphasis on reaching students of color.
- Designing and fostering grow-your-own programs aimed at candidates of color who already work in education.
- Providing resources so school districts and teacher training institutes

- can create new programs to recruit a racially diverse workforce of future educators.
- Providing additional financial support to attract highly qualified teachers, including higher starting salaries and effective loan forgiveness programs.
- Additional incentives should be considered, including housing assistance for recruiting teachers in rural schools and high-needs schools. The full supply and demand report can be found on the Minnesota Department of Education’s website, education.state.mn.us. The full EPIC report can be found on Education Minnesota’s website.



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M.A. Teaching (initial license)

CERTIFICATES

- Classroom Management: ENVoY
- International Baccalaureate

LICENSES

- Director of Special Education
- K-12 and 5-12 Education (various content areas)
- K-12 Principal
- Special Education (ABS, ASD, DD, and EBD)
- Superintendent
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Semifinalists named for Minnesota Teacher of the Year

The candidate field for this year’s Minnesota Teacher of the Year honor has been narrowed to 37.

A selection panel of business, community and education leaders chose the semifinalists from an initial field of 132 candidates from across the state.

The panel will review the semifinalists’ portfolios and additional video submissions and select about 10 finalists from among the group.

The 2016 Minnesota Teacher of the Year, Abdul Wright, will announce his successor at a banquet May 7 at the Radisson Blu Mall of America in Bloomington.

Candidates include pre-kindergarten through 12th-grade and Adult Basic Education teachers, from public or private schools. They must meet the program requirements and submit a portfolio to be considered for the award.

Education Minnesota, the statewide educators union, organizes and underwrites the Teacher of the Year program.

The Minnesota Teacher of the Year Program also receives support from the following organizations: Education Minnesota ESI, Educators Lifetime Solutions, EFS Advisors, Harvard Club of Minnesota Foundation, McDonald’s Restaurants of Minnesota, Radisson Blu Mall of America, SMART Technologies and United Educators Credit Union.

Learn more about the program and selection process in the story below or at www.educationminnesota.org/news/awards/teacher-of-the-year.

| NAME | DISTRICT | SUBJECT AREA | GRADE LEVEL |
|-----------------------|----------------------------------|------------------------------|--------------|
| Hinda Abdi | Minneapolis | Elementary | 1 |
| Alison Alowonle | Minnetonka | Elementary | 4-5 |
| Maria Amundson | Lake Park-Audubon | Elementary | Kindergarten |
| Alex Berry | Minneapolis | Visual art | 5-8 |
| Jeffrey Boyle | Blessed Trinity, Richfield | English | 7-8 |
| Pam Brolsma | Fairmont | Elementary | 1 |
| Corey Bulman | Westonka | English | 9, 11, 12 |
| Greta Callahan | Minneapolis | Elementary | Kindergarten |
| Adrian Davis | Minneapolis | Music | 9-12 |
| Sigrid Espe | Minneapolis | Math | 5 |
| Erin Gillepsie | Morris | Special education | 7-12 |
| John Glas | Burnsville-Eagan-Savage | Math | 6 |
| Stephanee Goeken | North St. Paul-Maplewood-Oakdale | Special education | 9-12 |
| Daniel Haley | Big Lake | Elementary | 1 |
| Shauna Heggum | Battle Lake | English | 8, 10-12 |
| John Horton | St. Paul | Elementary | 1-3 |
| Michael Houston | St. Paul | Math | 9-12 |
| Alison Humpal | Columbia Heights | English | 6-8 |
| Karla Johnson | Brainerd | English | 9 |
| Holly Johnston | St. Paul | Elementary | Kindergarten |
| Stacy Kelzer | Cambridge-Isanti | Math, science | 5 |
| Kristen Kilpo | Proctor | Math | 7 |
| Wade Laughlin | Shakopee | Language arts | 11-12 |
| Glenn Morehouse Olson | St. Francis | English, journalism, theatre | 9-12 |
| Elizabeth Neilson | Twin Cities Academy, St. Paul | English | 9-10 |
| Scott Noet | Owatonna | Social studies | 7 |
| Linda Pfeilsticker | Winona | Social studies | 9, 11-12 |
| Charity Przepiora | Roseville | Language arts | 10-12 |
| Teresa Stadem | Richfield | English | 9-12 |
| Sarah Swan McDonald | Northfield | Social studies | 9-12 |
| Charlene Warne | Delano | Elementary | 3 |
| Mark Westpfahl | St. Paul | American, Minnesota history | 6-7 |
| Carole Whitney | St. Paul | Vocal music | 9-12 |
| Marsha Wilson | Austin | Elementary | 4 |
| Ong Xiong | St. Paul | Elementary | Kindergarten |
| Eileen Zachman | St. Paul | Montessori | Pre-K, K |
| Mary Zilge | Lakeville | Vocal music | K-5 |

Minnesota Teacher of the Year selection process

The Minnesota Teacher of the Year is in its 53rd year as the state’s official recognition program honoring excellence in education.

The recipient of the award goes on to be Minnesota’s nominee for the National Teacher of the Year and represents Minnesota’s thousands of excellent educators. Minnesota has had four National Teachers of the Year, ranking us second in the nation behind California.

Who is eligible?

Any pre-kindergarten through 12th-grade teacher in a public, private, charter or parochial school may be nominated.

Eligible nominees must meet these criteria:

- Teach in a public or nonpublic Pre-K through 12th-grade school or ECCE or Adult Basic Education program, working at least 50 percent of the time directly with students.

- Hold a bachelor’s degree and a Minnesota teaching license.
- Have completed three years of teaching by the nomination deadline.
- Intend to teach during the following school year.

How are teachers nominated?

Peers, school personnel, parents and students may nominate teachers. Many nominees come from school district-level Teacher of the Year programs throughout the state. Self-nominations are also accepted.

The nomination period is open each fall from Oct. 1 through Nov. 15. An online nomination form can be found during that time at www.educationminnesota.org/news/awards/teacher-of-the-year.

What is the selection process?

Any teacher who is nominated can choose to continue in the selection

process by completing a portfolio, which includes essays about their philosophy of teaching, education message, professional accomplishments and letters of recommendation.

A selection committee representing Minnesota leaders in education, business and government meet to read the portfolios and choose who moves on to the semifinalist round.

Semifinalists are required to submit a 2- to 3-minute video summarizing their education message. The panel reads the semifinalists’ portfolios again and watches the videos to decide who moves on to be a finalist.

Finalists have a half-hour interview with the selection panel in May. After those interviews, the panel decides who is the year’s recipient.

The recipient is announced at a banquet each May. The surprise announcement comes at the end of the celebration of all teachers throughout Minnesota.



How is the program run?

Education Minnesota organizes and underwrites the program, which means the union handles only the business of running the program, not the selection process. Minnesota is one of a small number of states in which the union runs the program. Most are run through the state’s department of education.

The business of selecting panel members and deciding on the selection process is done by the program’s chairs, who are faculty at teacher education institutions in Minnesota.

Program and award support also comes from Education Minnesota ESI, Educators Lifetime Solutions, EFS Advisors, the Harvard Club of Minnesota Foundation, McDonald’s Restaurants of Minnesota, Radisson Blu Mall of America, SMART Technologies and United Educators Credit Union.

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

Members, locals need to beware of phishing scams

Education Minnesota members and locals have been recent targets of identity theft scams.

Since the beginning of the year, a small number of locals have been targeted in “spear phishing” email attacks. Emails that appeared to be from the local president’s email account were sent to the local treasurer, asking the treasurer to wire money from the local’s bank account to a different account. In both instances, the treasurers contacted the local president directly, discovered the

deception and did not send any money to a different bank account.

Spear phishing is an email that appears to be from an individual or business with which the recipient is familiar. But these emails are scams from the same type of criminal hackers who try to obtain credit card and bank account numbers, passwords and other financial information on your computer, tablet or smartphone.

The Bloomington School District was also a recent

target of a phishing attack.

An email requesting tax information for Bloomington Public School employees, which led to personal information including addresses and Social Security numbers of former and current Bloomington schools employees, was stolen in the scam, according to the Minneapolis Star Tribune.

The Cloquet School District was hit with such an attack last March; the ransom amount was \$6,000, according to the Star Tribune.

FREE IDENTITY THEFT PROTECTION AVAILABLE FOR ALL MEMBERS

Education Minnesota ESI has teamed up with Securus ID to bring you CORE: a lineup of identity theft plans at exclusive member pricing.

All active Education Minnesota members are eligible for an individual complimentary CORE Essential identity theft plan. Register for your complimentary individual plan today at educationminnesota.securusid.com.

All members, including student, substitute, retired and reserve members, receive deeply discounted Education Minnesota ESI negotiated rates on family, as well as individual, plans. If you’ve already signed up, your costs may be up to 50 percent less than your previous rate.

Training breaks down staff development statute

Each year, school districts are required to set aside two percent of their basic revenue for staff development. But is it being used in a way that best benefits educators and students?

Education Minnesota has developed a training about what the staff development statute is, how to form a committee and how to work with administration to get the best use of the money for professional development. The training has recently expanded from a members-only session to also include a labor-management session for both educators and

administrators.

“This is a big amount of money for most districts,” said Jodi Olson, an education issues specialist at Education Minnesota who does most of the trainings on this topic. “We don’t want to see it go to waste or not properly be used.”

The intent of the statute is for districts and schools to implement a site-based process for both educational goals and staff development opportunities that will best meet the goal of improving student learning.

The statute requires all school districts to form a

staff development committee to help decide how to spend the money.

The committee must include licensed staff, support personnel, administrators and parents. Licensed staff must make up the majority of the committee.

The committee is tasked with developing the staff development plan, assisting site committees in developing a site plan that aligns with the goals of the district, monitoring and evaluating site level activities and submitting a report to the state education commissioner outlining the activities and

expenditures for the year.

The committee has to decide how it will make all of these decisions. This is sometimes the hardest part, according to Olson.

“They have to decide if they are going to vote on each decision and if it has to be decided to be unanimous consent or majority, etc.,” she said.

There are also opportunities for educators to include the formation and role of the committee in their contracts with the district.

Because the interpretation and implementation of the statutes are so different,

Education Minnesota partnered with the Minnesota School Boards Association, Minnesota Elementary Principals Association, Minnesota Association of Secondary School Principals, Minnesota Rural Education Association, Minnesota Association of School Administrators, Learning Forward Minnesota and the Minnesota Department of Education to create a frequently-asked-questions document.

To schedule a training in your district, contact your Education Minnesota field staff.

2017 April Financial Planning Workshops

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

Financial/Retirement Planning Essentials

METRO (weekday):

Tuesday, April 4
Anoka Technical College, Anoka, MN

Tuesday, April 25
Dakota County Technical College, Rosemount, MN

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

4:45-7 p.m. – Workshop/Dinner/Prizes

GREATER MN (Saturday):

Saturday, April 8
Rochester Community and Technical College, Rochester, MN

Saturday, April 8
Lake Superior College, Duluth, MN

Saturday, April 29
MN State Community and Technical College, Detroit Lakes, MN

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

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

Financial Planning for Beginners and NextGen

Tuesday, April 4
Anoka Technical College, Anoka, MN

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 month 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

Topics Include:

Pension

- ▶ Understanding your pension
- ▶ 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

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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EDUCATOR

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First-ever Race Equity Edcamp draws in crowd

Nearly 70 educators and community members gathered for a day filled with learning and discussions centered on race and equity in education at Education Minnesota’s Minnesota Educator Academy (MEA) Race Equity Edcamp, which took place at Maxfield Elementary School in St. Paul Feb. 11.

During an Edcamp, organizers set the schedule for the day but all sessions are determined by participants on the day of the event; everyone is welcome to propose and lead a session where conversation and collaboration are paramount.

The idea for the Race Equity Edcamp was a result of Education Minnesota’s member-led anti-racism professional development program, Facing Inequities and Racism in Education (FIRE). The FIRE program was created last year by a group of members from around the state, with the goal of establishing professional development offerings that cover the topics of racism and education for educators.

“The FIRE team decided

an Edcamp would be a great way for folks in the community, but for educators in particular, concerned with race and equity in education to have conversations about sometimes uncomfortable topics in safe spaces,” said Jen Kohan, an Education Minnesota education issues specialist who helped set up the FIRE program and the Edcamp.

The day began with a general session where those in attendance introduced themselves and generated ideas relating to race and equity in education. The ideas were voted on by the group to determine which topics would be selected as session themes, as well as who would facilitate the discussions around the themes. Participants were then released to attend the sessions in which they were interested—and encouraged to step out of a session if they realized the topic isn’t what they thought it would be. Some of the 17 topics from the Edcamp included conscious and unconscious bias, destroying systems of racial classification,

facilitating discussions around race with students and the impact of poverty and race on classrooms.

“It was fascinating to hear all of the different perspectives,” said Ashley Paul, a kindergarten teacher at Plymouth Creek Elementary School in Wayzata. Paul is involved with the FIRE group and helped Education Minnesota staff organize and facilitate the Edcamp. “I was impressed and excited to realize that many districts are doing diligent work around equity.”

Members from 23 different local unions were in attendance, along with a few representatives from nonprofit organizations, as well as community members.

Kohan knew from prior experience attending Edcamps that it would be rewarding for everyone involved. “When it comes down to it, the right people are always in the room.”

If you’re interested in having Education Minnesota host an Edcamp in your area, please contact Kohan at jen.kohan@edmn.org.



Participants in Education Minnesota’s first Race Equity Edcamp were able to choose topics for the day’s sessions, lead a session if they chose and then attend whichever sessions piqued their interest throughout the day.



Resources for protecting, helping immigrant students

In the wake of the 2016 election, educators have found themselves in a time of uncertainty. Some students have questions. Some are afraid amid an uptick in racially charged incidents at several Minnesota schools and President Donald Trump’s travel ban. The American Federation of Teachers, National Education Association, National Association of School Psychologists, Colorín Colorado, Teaching Tolerance, United We Dream, The Advocates for Human Rights and National Child Traumatic Stress Network have online resources available for educators who have questions, need guidance or want to help protect their students.

AFT’s Share My Lesson digital resources

Share My Lesson has digital resources designed to educate all students about immigration and create inclusive school communities. The collection of resources covers topics such as immigration policy and rights, how to build an inclusive classroom, information on the immigrant experience and mental health resources. Included in the online resources is a guide to help protect and prepare immigrant youth and families for immigration and customs raids, which features a handout with six tips educators and school staff can do in that situation. Classroom resources include lesson plans on immigrants’ rights and how to discuss the Syrian civil war.

The collection can be found at <https://sharemylesson.com/immigration>.

NEA safe schools, immigrant support resources

The NEA has numerous resources and toolkits around diversity and cultural competency, as well as how to help immigrant students in schools. Resources include a booklet on legal issues for school districts related to the education of undocumented children and information on how you can advocate for students and their families. The NEA’s site also features a comic book created by students called “Super DACA Defenders.”

These classroom resources can be found at www.nea.org/home/64661.htm#i.

NEA EdJustice, the union’s social justice campaign, also has resources on immigration rights and how educators can help. This website includes tips on creating a “safe zone” resolution for school boards, a guide from the National Immigration Law Center and what educators can do in the event of an immigration raid.

These resources can be found at <http://educationvotes.nea.org/neaedjustice/social-justice-issues/immigration/>

Support for refugee children from the National Association of School Psychologists

The NASP has a webpage dedicated to tips for educators in order to best support refugee children and youth. The site includes resources on how to understand and recognize stressors, understand the effect of trauma on school functioning, identify students who are at high risk and how to plan interventions, access resources in local communities and equip staff with trauma-sensitive responses and supports.

To read more about the tips and resources, go to www.nasponline.org/resources-and-publications/resources/school-safety-and-crisis/war-and-terrorism/supporting-refugee-students.

Colorín Colorado resources, updates

Colorín Colorado is a national multimedia project, sponsored by the NEA and AFT, that is focused on providing resources for families and educators of English language learners. The site features frequently asked questions about enrollment of immigrant students or students who are children of immigrants, resources on the laws and policies regarding immigrant students in schools and ways to make students feel welcome.

To see these resources, go to www.colorincolorado.org/ell-basics/serving-and-supporting-immigrant-students-information-schools.

The website also features articles, video clips, books, research, reports and online resources that focus on ways educators can support students and families who are refugees.

These resources can be found at www.colorincolorado.org/ell-basics/special-populations/refugee-students.

Teaching Tolerance lesson plans, classroom activities

Teaching Tolerance, a project of the Southern Poverty Law Center, provides many classroom resources and lesson plan ideas for educators. The site features numerous resources to help students recognize and respond to bias against immigrants, Muslims and Sikhs, as well as an educator’s guide to the immigration debate. Included in the lesson plans are ways to use photographs to expose anti-immigrant sentiments, 10 myths about immigration, religious diversity webinars, a lesson about a child’s

experience coming to this country and lessons on religious clothing.

These resources and more can be found at www.tolerance.org/voting-elections.

United We Dream curriculum, webinars and DACA resources

United We Dream is an immigrant youth-led organization made up of over 100,000 immigrant youth and allies and 55 affiliate organizations in 26 states. The organization has multiple resources for educators, including information on how educators can help students who may qualify for Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA), webinars with resources for educators and undocumented students and curriculum on education, immigration and identity.

To see all of the resources from this organization, go to <http://unitedwedream.org/about/projects/education-deep/>.

The Advocates for Human Rights resources for teaching human rights issues

The Advocates for Human Rights is a nonprofit organization that has created online resources for educators interested in human rights education. The website features an online manual for those interested in becoming human rights educators, lesson plans organized by grade and topic, toolkits, book recommendations and a presentation on addressing the achievement gap.

These resources can be found at www.theadvocatesforhumanrights.org/for_educators.

National Child Traumatic Stress Network refugee trauma resources

The NCTSN is an organization funded by the Center for Mental Health Services, Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and is jointly coordinated by UCLA and Duke University. The organization’s website features a refugee trauma page, with specific information for schools and educators. Topics covered on the site include what experiences refugee students might face in schools, steps educators and administrators can take to support refugee youth and examples of trauma-related behaviors that might be specific to refugee children.

Find all of the information for educators at <http://nctsn.org/trauma-types/refugee-trauma/guidance-teachers>.

Get up, stand up, bargain for your (statutory) rights

In a unionized workplace, we look in a number of different places to learn about our wages, benefits, leave entitlements and job protections. Although the most obvious location is the collective bargaining agreement, the rules governing a person's employment are also set forth in employer policies and state and federal laws.

It is common in bargaining for employers to assert that statutory rights or protections need not be in the collective bargaining agreement. Union negotiators should not accept that argument. There are many reasons to enshrine statutory rights in your collective bargaining agreement, and unions should do just that.

1. State and federal laws are not written in stone.

If the past few months have taught us anything, it's that state and federal laws may be modified or repealed with little or no warning. In Minnesota, we have already seen proposed legislation to limit the use of union leave under the Minnesota Public Employment Labor Relations Act and proposed legislation to make recently enacted city ordinances mandating sick leave unenforceable. The best way to guarantee a benefit is



Nicole Blissenbach

to negotiate that benefit into your union contract. Changes to your collective bargaining agreement cannot be made at the whim of people at the Capitol; they must be agreed to by the union and the employer through the collective bargaining process.

2. Not everyone is eligible for statutory benefits and protections.

Many statutes contain complicated eligibility requirements. Those limitations may exclude some members of your bargaining unit from getting the benefits and protections of certain statutes. For example, to be eligible for the benefits contained in the Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA),

an employee must have worked for the employer for at least 12 months and worked at least 1250 hours in the 12 months prior to the leave. Bargaining rights, like those contained in the FMLA, into your contract could eliminate the complicated eligibility requirements and extend those benefits to all bargaining unit members.

3. Bargained benefits may improve on those provided in statute.

State and federal statutes set the floor when it comes to employee rights, not the ceiling. In other words, an employer cannot provide an employee with less benefits or protections than those provided in the law, but they can provide more benefits and protections. Consider, for example, the minimum wage. It is illegal for an employer to pay an employee less than minimum wage. It is, however, acceptable and desirable for a union to bargain a wage rate higher than the minimum wage for its members. Another example is the use of earned sick leave for the care of relatives. Minnesota statute allows for the use of personal sick leave for the care of certain relatives. The statute allows the employer to limit sick leave use for that

purpose to 160 hours in a 12-month period. If this issue is a priority for your bargaining unit, the union could negotiate a much higher limit.

4. Bargained benefits can be enforced through the contractual grievance and arbitration procedure.

Statutory rights are typically enforced through a lawsuit or a complaint to a government agency. These processes are both time-consuming and cost-prohibitive to the average employee. Because of these barriers, many statutory violations are not remedied. Most collective bargaining agreements contain a grievance and arbitration procedure for disputes over the provisions contained in the agreement. Unlike the court process, the grievance and arbitration process is relatively inexpensive and can be much faster. Overall, rights contained in a union contract are much quicker and easier to enforce.

5. Contractual rights are often more accessible than statutory rights.

Most employees do not peruse the Minnesota Office of the Revisor of Statutes website to research and study up on their statutory rights.

LEGAL BRIEFS

On the other hand, most union members do have easy access to a copy of their collective bargaining agreement. By negotiating statutory rights and protections into the union contract, the rights are more accessible to the members of that bargaining unit. Without knowledge of their existence, rights and protections mean nothing.

When it comes to collective bargaining, very little is off-limits. I always tell people that if a proposal would improve the working conditions of you and your colleagues or the learning conditions of your students, it doesn't hurt to ask. And, if that proposal is important enough, you should organize and advocate to achieve your bargaining goals.

If you have specific questions about how to negotiate statutory rights into your collective bargaining agreement or if you have questions about your rights, contact your Education Minnesota field staff.

♦ **Nicole Blissenbach**
Blissenbach is an Education Minnesota staff attorney.

MEMBERS WANT TO KNOW

SAVING ON EVERYDAY PRODUCTS AND SERVICES

Join us as we celebrate 60 years of serving Minnesota educators & our recent designation as a sponsored benefit of Education Minnesota ESI!

The year was 1957. United Educators Credit Union (UECU) has just opened its first branch at Minnesota Education Association headquarters located on Sherburne Avenue, St. Paul. Originally MEA Credit Union, UECU assisted with the financial needs of the education community. Throughout the years – from strikes and natural disasters, to times of prosperity – the credit union was there. Today, with over \$170 million in assets and nearly 16,000 members, UECU continues to provide Minnesota educators with a full line of financial services.

Q. What's the difference between a bank and UECU?
A. Unlike a bank, UECU operates as a not-for-profit cooperative. Earnings are distributed back to our members in the form of lower loan rates, higher savings rates and lower or no service fees. Above all, UECU is renowned for its personal service, "where you are a name, not a number."

Q. How do I become a member?
A. Open an account online or in person. Your initial deposit of at least \$5, called a 'share', makes you a member and an owner.

Q. How do I access my accounts?
A. Choose from 4 convenient Twin Cities branch locations or online. Additionally, our ATM locator identifies many surcharge-free locations at stores such as Walgreens, Target and CVS Pharmacy. Online & mobile banking is available from anywhere and a Mobile app with Mobile deposit is available on Android™ and iPhone® devices.

Q. In addition to financial products and services, what other support can I expect?
A. UECU supports professional development through scholarships, grants, student loans, and student loan consolidation. As an education credit union, our mission is to promote financial wellness with educators as well as their students! Financial literacy curriculum is available free for your classroom.

We're celebrating our 60th anniversary all year and want you to join us. We'll give you a \$60 dollar gift card for opening a checking account with direct deposit!
(Check out our ad in this *Educator* edition for more details)

Contact UECU or visit www.uecu.coop today to learn more about the value of membership!

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EDUCATION MINNESOTA OPPORTUNITIES

STAY CONNECTED THROUGH RETIRED MEMBERSHIP

Education Minnesota members who have retired after Sept. 1, 2015, or are planning to retire in the future and have been a member for at least 10 years are eligible to continue as a retired member at no additional cost.

The benefits of retired membership include:

- Continued access to Economic Services Inc. (ESI), National Education Association and American Federation of Teachers member benefit programs.
- Staying connected with other retired colleagues through newsletters, regional events and annual meetings.
- Participating in Education Minnesota political action and legislative efforts on such important issues as pension benefits

and retiree medical insurance.

- Working to assure a quality education for future generations of Minnesota students.
- Supporting Education Minnesota’s ongoing efforts to assure quality working conditions, as well as competitive salaries and benefits for school employees.
- Maintaining Educators Employment Liability (EEL) insurance coverage when teaching as a day-to-day substitute in all public school districts in Minnesota.

Education Minnesota would like to see all current active teacher, education support professional and higher education faculty members continue on as members of

Education Minnesota Retired.

Using their experience in education and their flexible schedules, retired members can help build power in the union by volunteering and recruiting other members to engage in Education Minnesota campaign activities, serving as ambassadors for educators and the union with community service groups and covering hearings and lobbying for Education Minnesota’s legislative agenda.

For more information about Education Minnesota Retired, go to retired.mn.aft.org or find the group on Facebook.

For more information about applying for a retired membership and to see if you are eligible to receive the benefits at no cost, go to www.educationminnesota.org/member-benefits/join-us/retired-membership.

ABOUT THIS PAGE

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

To submit an opportunity:

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

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

ESP regional trainings focus on school safety

This spring, Education Minnesota is offering a free training for education support professionals, called “Considering School Safety: Ensuring a Safe Environment for Students and Staff.” The trainings will be held at locations across the state. Attendees will learn about trauma-informed instruction, preventive strategies for ensuring staff safety and options for dealing with staff injuries. Dinner will be provided and continuing education credits are available.

Find the meeting nearest you and register at bit.ly/espmeetings.

Free primary sources workshops

The Library of Congress has funded a grant to the Minnesota Historical Society and partners to offer regional workshops for educators currently teaching social studies. Dates are available in March and April. The workshops are open to current K-12 classroom teachers. Registration is limited to 25 participants at each workshop, and registration is required. All participants who attend the full workshop receive a stipend, lunch and continuing education units.

For more information or to register, <http://education.mnhs.org/loc/workshops>.

Council of math teachers spring conference

The annual Minnesota Council of Teachers of Mathematics Spring Conference is scheduled for April 28-29 in Duluth. “Creating Communities of Success: Each and Every...Learner, Teacher, Standard, School and Moment” will feature approximately 150 workshops and sessions for teachers at all grade levels as well as nearly 40 exhibitors. Keynote speakers are Pamela Weber Harris on “Real Math for All Students” and José Luis Vilson on “Why Math is an Equity Issue.” The annual Ross Taylor Symposium for Mathematics Education and Leadership, focused on “Building Powerful Numeracy,” will precede the conference on April 27. Schools and/or districts are encouraged to send a leadership team.

For registration information, go to www.mctm.org.

Evergreen youth, families workshop

The Evergreen Youth & Family Services’ annual conference will be held March 23-24 at the Sanford Regional Events Center in Bemidji. New this year are sessions on combating adverse childhood experiences, how to advocate effectively for youth services, building relationships with girls of color, best practices for homeless children and more. Other session topics include transitions and autism, advocating for youth and young adult crime victims and youth and anxiety. Continuing education credits are available.

For more information and how to register, go to www.evergreenyfs.org/organization/conference-training.

Science teacher institutes at Hamline

Hamline University is offering three free summer institutes for teachers of science. The three-day WaterWorks Institute allows teachers to enrich their water-related curricula by learning from experts on how safe drinking water is produced and experiencing a host of water resources and activities for the classroom. The Rivers Institute is designed to promote environmental and ecological concepts in the science classroom. Over three days, teachers explore the Mississippi or St. Croix River and investigate water ecosystems and river engineering. Biotechnology for Teachers in the Classroom (BioTIC) is designed to bring biology teachers up to speed on the rapid advancements in biotech research, applications and issues.

For detailed information and online applications, please visit www.hamline.edu/education/cgee/teacher-institutes.html.

CLASSROOM RESOURCES

NEA Works4Me has practical tips for educators

The National Education Association houses tips from educators across the country on its Works4Me website. Topics include classroom ideas for new teachers, ways to motivate older students to read, tackling long-form math problems and new apps for use in the classroom. The site allows users to search by academic subject, classroom management, educational equipment and supplies, learning activities, student skill sets and teaching method pedagogy. Educators can also sign up for a biweekly e-newsletter that includes teaching strategies and classroom resources.

To see tips or sign up for the e-newsletter, go to www.nea.org/works4me.

Free resources from the California Academy of Science

The California Academy of Science’s teaching resources offer online courses, interactives, toolkits and web chats for educators. Lesson plans and classroom activities include healthy oceans, vocabulary strategies, a habitat Earth film, virtual programs from the academy and interactive games. Online professional development opportunities include topics such as how science works, biodiversity and earthquakes. Live webcams featuring sharks, penguins, a coral reef and the Farallon Islands are also available.

To see all of the offerings, go to www.calacademy.org/educators.

Online WWII collection features videos, lesson plans

Produced by National History Day, the Understanding Sacrifice website is a collection of videos, primary source, secondary sources and lesson plans that cover soldiers who made the ultimate sacrifice in World War II. The site features a listing of cemeteries and memorials, descriptions of the fallen soldiers and lesson plans based on grade level and subject.

To view all of the resources, go to <http://abmceducation.org>.

Online multi-arts toolkits available

The Kentucky Educational Television’s arts toolkit combines multimedia resources designed to provide teachers with high-quality teaching resources that align to academic standards while bringing the excitement of dance, drama, music and the visual arts into the classroom. Lessons are aligned to Kentucky State Standards but can be adapted to other state standards. All lessons include assessment rubrics, and many have handouts. Resources in the toolkits are free on the website. Individual boxed toolkits are also available for purchase.

For more information and to see all the offerings, go to www.ket.org/education/arts-toolkit.

Middle, high school physics app, website

The Particle Adventure is an interactive tour of quarks, neutrinos, Higgs Bosons, extra dimensions, dark matter, accelerators and particle detectors for students in grades 7-12. Students click through each module’s slides and answer questions as they progress. Some sections end with brief quizzes. The site is available in English and fifteen other languages. There is a web and app version of the site available.

View the offerings at <http://particleadventure.org>.

GRANTS AND AWARDS

Education Minnesota professional development, classroom grant applications due April 3

The Education Minnesota Foundation for Excellence in Teaching and Learning is offering its higher education faculty professional development, education support professionals professional development and affinity grants this spring, with applications due April 3. Higher education members can request up to \$3,000 and ESP members can access up to \$1,500. Second-year classroom and classroom technology grant applications are also due April 3. Both of these grants are available for up to \$3,000.

For more information about the foundation or how to apply for a grant, go to www.educationminnesota.org/resources/grants/foundation.

Student volunteerism microgrants available

The Karma for Cara Foundation is offering a microgrant program for students ages 18 and under. Students may apply for funds between \$250 and \$1,000 to complete service projects in their communities. Ideas for projects include turning a vacant lot into a community garden, rebuilding a school playground or helping senior citizens get their homes ready for winter. The next grant application deadline is April 1.

For more information about the program or how to apply, go to <http://karmaforcara.org/get-involved/apply-for-a-microgrant>.