



MINNESOTA EDUCATOR

A publication for the members of Education Minnesota

May 2017

2017 REPRESENTATIVE CONVENTION

Education bills move forward as session end nears

End-of-session rally, letter-writing campaign to show support for public education, students

The 2017 legislative session moves into its last month with House and Senate Republicans passing anti-public education bills, including tax credits for private school tuition and changes to teacher licensure standards and education funding.

As of press time, conference committees were discussing the differences between the House and Senate bills on spending, taxes and policy, all of which have an impact on education.

Once the conference committees work out the

differences in their bills, they are voted on again by the full House and Senate. If the bills pass both floors, they will be sent to the governor for his approval or veto.

Education Minnesota encourages all members to contact their legislators about any of the bills, sharing their questions, comments or concerns. Education Minnesota is also organizing a letter-writing campaign to Gov. Dayton, as well as legislators, to make sure bills that would hurt the public education system in our state are voted down or

vetoed. Read more about how to send your notes to the Capitol, as well as our Rally for Public Education on May 20, on page 6.

The fight for education funding is currently in conference committee.

House Republicans passed an education bill that increases school funding by just \$271 million.

House GOP leaders claim they're increasing the funding formula by 1.25 percent each year of the biennium. But it's not a true increase. That 1.25 percent relies on shifts from delinking

compensatory revenue and Early Childhood Family Education from the general education formula, as well as cuts to underrepresented kids and other programming like Pathway II early learning scholarships and Adult Basic Education.

House Republicans also eliminated the governor's voluntary pre-K program.

The Senate passed its education bill that increases funding by \$300 million. Most of that goes to a 1.5 percent annual increase to the funding formula for the next two years.

Both the House and Senate funding proposals do not even keep up with inflation increases.

"There's not one school district in the state saying, 'We're good. Everything's fine.' Because it's not," said Sen. Dan Schoen during the Senate debate on funding.

Gov. Mark Dayton released his supplemental budget recommendations after the budget forecast predicted Minnesota's surplus will increase to \$1.65 billion over the next two years.

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WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU!

Read the article about what is happening during the last few weeks of the legislative session and our efforts to support increased funding. Then answer the question, "What will your school lose if education funding is not increased this session?" 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 be run in next month's Minnesota Educator.

Congratulations to last month's contest winner, **Debbie Brown** of Goodhue County Education District.

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Changing from private spectators to public advocates

I love Facebook. Twitter, too.

I can spend hours keeping up with old friends and learning more about the people I see every day. My feeds include interesting articles and there's always something to comment on, especially in the past three months.

My pages do get political, but it's good to trade ideas with friends. They always understand when I vent and most are sympathetic because they see the same problems I do.

Does that sound familiar? I've been thinking a lot about social media and politics lately because I'm worried too many educators think going back and forth with friends on Facebook makes them an activist. It really doesn't.

When it comes down to it, an educator having an authentic face-to-face conversation with her neighbors is worth 50 people holding up their phones and Facebooking to each other. If we don't understand the difference, our schools could be in big trouble. There are tough times ahead for educators and public education. We need to be ready with a level of public engagement we have rarely achieved.

The U.S. Secretary of Education is Betsy DeVos,



Denise Specht, president

who supports taxpayer-funded vouchers for private schools; unregulated, for-profit charter schools and puts greedy lenders ahead of college students.

The newest justice on the U.S. Supreme Court is Neil Gorsuch, who replaces Antonin Scalia as a solid vote against working people. We can expect more rulings from the court restricting voting rights, limiting access to birth control and destabilizing unions by forcing them to bargain contracts for free-riders.

Collective bargaining has gone down in Michigan, Arizona, Wisconsin and Iowa in the past few years with the help of oceans of dark money for misleading political ads. It could happen here, too, if the anti-union

party in Minnesota won the House, Senate and governor's residence.

As I write this, we're facing education budgets from the House and Senate that are smaller than inflation, the de-funding of pre-K, a bill that would allow people without college degrees to teach for eight years and a bill to create school vouchers through the back door of the state tax code.

The challenges are real, but so are the opportunities. To paraphrase Eleanor Roosevelt, a union is like a tea bag—you can't tell how strong it is until you put it in hot water. We will soon see how strong we are by the advocacy of our members.

There are already good signs. There are engagement plans in 258 Education Minnesota locals, representing more than 74,500 members. More than 550 educators have come to the Capitol for lobby days. Since January, educators have sent more than 13,000 emails and made 1,000 calls to lawmakers.

Those are some big numbers, but they won't be enough to turn the anti-school tide in this country. Even more educators need to transform from social media spectators to activists.

It's easy for some people to say it's not worth the effort,

but I'll remind them of the words the great abolitionist Frederick Douglass, "Those who profess to favor freedom, and yet depreciate agitation, are (people) who want crops without plowing up the ground."

It's a shorter walk from spectator to activist than some people think because most educators are already partway there. We're just asking everyone to keep going.

Assigning the novels of Toni Morrison or Margaret Atwood in high school is a political act. So is presenting the poetry of Sandra Cisneros or Naomi Shihab Nye, or giving out tiny drops of empathy from Leo Lionni to the newest readers.

You're already an activist if you teach the Stonewall riots in the same frame as the march on Selma, the Ludlow Strike, Kent State and Boston Harbor. And you are engaged if you provide a safe space for transsexual students to eat lunch, or give an extra boost to a girl with the talent and interest to be a scientist, or step in against bullying and hate speech.

You're already an activist if you volunteer your time to mentor a student of color, or a student living in poverty, who needs just a little more of you to succeed.

Despite the sneers of

"political correctness," our work in schools and colleges to spread simple decency has made Minnesota a more civilized place. We're still on the journey and the finish line is far away, but ask yourself this: Would a majority of Minnesotans have voted for marriage equality even 15 years ago? Probably not.

Laws didn't change society. Educators did. The laws just caught up.

If we want to keep on this march of progress toward decency, diversity, empathy and equal access to all the opportunities for a good life, we all need to act. Reaching out to people who might not agree, and old-fashioned people-powered politics, are how Education Minnesota will get through the storm.

So, for the good of our students, our schools and our union, please consider logging off for a few nights this spring and having some sincere conversations about public education with someone who might not agree you. It's our best bet to protect the progress we've made...

Together,

Twitter: @DeniseSpecht

Past presidents share advice for keeping our union strong

As a celebration of our union's history at this year's Representative Convention, Education Minnesota interviewed the six past presidents of the Minnesota Education Association, Minnesota Federation of Teachers and merged-Education Minnesota who are living in the state. We asked them to share their memories of challenges they faced during their tenure and how the union grew stronger because of those challenges, as well as advice they had for educators today. Below are some of the pieces of advice they offered. The full video is on Education Minnesota's YouTube channel, www.youtube.com/EducationMinnesota.

"A lot of people sacrificed a lot of stuff (during my time as president), but we saw improvement. We were players in Minnesota politics and we were ready to be players. And you got to fight like hell to keep it."

Don Hill, MEA president, 1975-1983

"I came into the profession when teachers didn't have much power, especially at a small school. We didn't have the right to strike or collective bargaining. The power of the union is needed in making decisions in school districts."

Dick Mans, MFT president, 1977-1987

"Our core mission still is that we create a better world. Every group rises up to the challenge. It's worth the sweat, blood and tears you're putting into it, because the future generation depends on it."

Marti Zins, MEA president, 1983-1986

"It's time to sit up, be alert and get to work. Being involved in the association is a tremendous growth opportunity. What happens is you gain skills that can be translated into other things. It can be rewarding and it can be fun."

Bob Astrup, MEA president, 1986-1994

"The themes of attacks on collective bargaining rights have always been there. It all goes back to our members understanding the importance of our union. Why do you need a collective voice? Our members don't always like politics. But ultimately it's the politicians that makes those decisions."

Judy Schaubach, MEA president, 1994-1998, Education Minnesota co-president, 1998-2001, Education Minnesota president, 2001-2007

"We need to have a positive message about what we're doing. It opens up conversations that you didn't know were possible, with members and in our communities. That is going to be the key for staying a vibrant voice for not only educators, but students in the state of Minnesota. The investment in students and public education is the great equalizer. It's the one that's going to help open doors for them, so they have opportunities beyond where they started."

Tom Doohar, Education Minnesota president, 2007-2013

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RC business focuses on strengthening union's power

The annual Education Minnesota Representative Convention is the union's business meeting, with delegates dictating how they would like to see organization move forward in the coming years.

This year, the 512 convention delegates and 25 alternates focused on building power to fight off anti-union and anti-public education attacks.

The biggest example of this was the passing of a Constitution and Bylaw amendment that will increase the Political Action Committee (PAC) assessment for each member by \$10 a year.

Delegates heavily debated the topic, including possibly lowering the amount to \$5 or not increasing it at all. The PAC Board put forward the amendment because the need to win the governor's race and win back a pro-public education and pro-union majority in the House in 2018 is vitally important.

PAC money can also be used by local union's for help with school board and local levy elections, which is being utilized more and more each year.

"Winning this race will require more spending and resources than ever," said PAC Board Chair Doug Werner, a teacher in Minneapolis. "We know we need more to engage our members, but we also know running for office takes more resources than ever before. We want to create a transparent, democratic, inclusive and relational path to 2018. We need to invest more to make sure our next governor is pro-public education."

Concerns were shared about the impact on member's paychecks, especially education support professional members whose wages are significantly lower than teachers.

Other Constitution and Bylaw amendments passed to add the Student Program president, the Ethnic Minority

Affairs Committee chair and any Education Minnesota member serving as an officer with the Minnesota AFL-CIO, NEA or AFT to have a seat on the governing board.

Action items passed that focus Education Minnesota's work on ensuring members see value in their union, continuing to review and work on local union's affiliations with Area Labor Councils and Regional Labor Federations, having locals put into their contracts language that is currently in statute or law to protect their rights and give scholarships for early-career educators to attend Summer Seminar.

An action item passed that also asks all local unions to renew their membership with the completion of a new membership application form by December 2017.

"We want to ensure the organization has proper documentation for all members," said Don Sinner, a teacher from Lakeville who submitted the item.

"This will allow us to archive and track members, some of whom haven't filled out a membership form in 25 years."

Delegates to the convention also elected members to the governing board and a National Education Association director position.

NEA Director

- Nancy Cordes, Robbinsdale Federation of Teachers

Governing Board At-Large positions

- Zone 1: Maureen Morrow, Deer River Education Association
- Zone 2: Heidi Morris, Education Minnesota Duluth-Clerical
- Zone 3: Ryan Fiereck, Education Minnesota St. Francis
- Zone 4: Heather Bakke, Gibbon-Fairfax-Winthrop Education Association
- Zone 5: Joe Cerar, Education Minnesota Plainville-Elgin-Millville

- Zone 6: Kate Schmidt, Dakota County United Educators
- Zone 7: Delene Thomas-Sanders, North St. Paul-Maplewood-Oakdale Education Association
- Zone 8: Scott Schaefer, Anoka Hennepin Education Minnesota

At-Large Vacancy (2 positions)

- Jamie Alsleben, Eden Prairie Education Association
- Al Helgersen, Albert Lea Education Association

At-Large ESP (2 positions)

- Sue Snyder, Saint Paul Federation of Teachers ESP
- Michelle Dennard, Education Minnesota-Osseo ESP

At-Large Higher Ed/Statewide Affiliate

- Bety Rios-Christensen, State Residential Schools Education Association



NEA Vice President Becky Pringle told the RC delegates that the work of educators is fundamental to this nation and its success.

AFT President Randi Weingarten reminded delegates that while public education feels under attack, public schools are places of endless opportunities.

ISEA President Tammy Wawro shared Iowa's story of recently losing collective bargaining rights and how they are fighting back.

President Denise Specht presented Gov. Dayton with a jersey signed by RC delegates as a thank you for being the "goalie" for Minnesota students.

Speakers discuss challenges, but how to stay strong

The 2017 Representative Convention featured powerful speeches by two leaders of our national unions, as well as the president of the Iowa State Education Association and Gov. Mark Dayton.

National Education Association Vice President Becky Pringle addressed the crowd Friday night and talked about the positive work Education Minnesota has been doing, and the need to do more.

"Education Minnesota continues to distinguish itself in all facets of the NEA's priorities—engaging new educators, embracing ESSA, recruiting educators and has stepped up to the challenge of bringing racial justice into education," she said.

Pringle said that the future of public education and worker's rights may be uncertain right now, but that doesn't mean the work goes away. And she said the convention's theme was the perfect message for this time in our history,

"The power of 'we' could not be a better reminder

that together, with our collective strength, we can continue to move forward and advocate for education professionals," she said. "We can fulfill the promise of public education so every single student in this country can succeed in a diverse and independent world."

The social justice work being done by Education Minnesota and the NEA is part of our present journey, Pringle said, just as it has been part of our history.

"Our social justice heroes have laid a firm foundation for us," she said. "It's good to find courage and inspiration in the leaders who came before us. Freedom is earned and fought for in every single generation. It's our turn now. This is our moment. We must demand what's right."

American Federation of Teachers President Randi Weingarten echoed the same message of fight and spirit needed to push through our current challenges when she addressed the convention Saturday morning.

Weingarten spoke about a recent visit to a public school

district in Ohio, where U.S. Secretary of Education Betsy DeVos met with her and the district's educators.

"(DeVos) saw an example of a rural school focused on what works. The district voted for Trump, but they love their public schools," Weingarten said. "Our public schools are not dead ends. They are places of endless opportunities. We are going to fight her and fight her and fight her to make sure she works with us to make sure that she gives us what we need to do the work we do every day."

Weingarten also called for educators step up and never be invisible.

"People are showing up like never before. There is much more that unites us than divides us" she said.

"But there are issues and I am afraid for our democracy. I'm afraid union rights. But there are two sides of a coin—one side is the challenge and the other side is the opportunity. Are we ready to fight for democracy? Are we ready to fight for our public schools? Are we ready to take

back our country?"

Iowa State Education Association President Tammy Wawro drove up from her state to speak to the convention, because earlier this year, they lost the ability to collectively bargain for anything besides wages in just a matter of days after their Legislature convened.

"I never dreamed I would be seeing this in Iowa," she said. "But elections matter and we lost our slim pro-education majority in the Senate last fall. We knew the anti-union forces would take down our collective bargaining law."

Wawro shared how their local unions and staff worked to fight back the challenge, but in the end, it wasn't enough. Many districts were able to settle one last contract with their districts, but others are finding themselves trying to get a base wage above \$29,000.

"The Iowa Legislature changed our bargaining laws and changed our future forever," Wawro said. "We saw dark money come into our state to take

down collective bargaining. We don't have dark money. We have your money. But we organize and we fight."

But the speaker getting the biggest cheers from the crowd on Saturday was Gov. Mark Dayton.

Dayton spoke about the fight our state is having with its Legislature and how he will do everything he can to stop the bad stuff from getting through.

"Our state government has no more important job than to promote public education," he said. "Too few legislators understand what you do every day. Almost all Minnesotans value schools and higher education, but don't understand that it hasn't been funded properly."

He called for delegates to take action and help him in this fight.

"We're going to be fighting to prevent the bad things and also to get the good things through," he said. "Your legislators need to hear from you. That makes a difference. Now is the time for our voices to be heard."

Award winners share their passion for students, union

Three of Education Minnesota’s internal award winners were honored at the 2017 Representative Convention.

Peterson-Schaubach Leadership Award

The 2017 Peterson-Schaubach Leadership Award was given to Don Sinner, president of Education Minnesota-Lakeville and one of our state’s National Education Association Directors.

The award is Education Minnesota’s highest leadership honor, said President Denise Specht, before presenting him his award.

“Those who know Don well never feel like he doesn’t care,” she said. “He has fought in his local for competitive salaries, good working conditions and professional respect for his colleagues. He has worked hard to bring in new members and mentor new leaders. As an NEA Director, Don has been a strong voice for Minnesota educators in Washington.”

“Leadership to me is a vow of service,” said Sinner in his award recognition video. “I got into leadership because I wanted to create better conditions for educators. I try to engage and empower others to find their passion.”

Human Rights Award

The 2017 Human Rights Award was given to Diedra Carlson, an elementary teacher at J.J. Hill Montessori Magnet School in St. Paul.

“Deidra has a deep understanding of a well-rounded, equitable education,” said Specht, before presenting her the award. “She built from scratch a Montessori classroom with a strong foundation of differentiated instruction, mindfulness and a work ethic that is a model of success in her school district.”

Carlson’s work extends to her colleagues as well.

“Deidra has worked to advance fair labor practices and end discriminatory practices for students and staff in the St. Paul district,” said Specht.

Education Support Professional of the Year

The 2016 Education Minnesota Education Support Professional (ESP) of the Year, Marcell Branch, was also honored.

Branch, a behavior specialist at West Education Center in Intermediate District 287.

“He keeps the school building safe and builds a connection with students,” said Specht, while introducing him. “He tries to connect with what’s going on in their lives. He understands the students and where they are coming from because he says, ‘I was them at one time.’”

Branch also mentors staff and is an advocate for his union.



(Top right) Education Minnesota-Lakeville President and NEA Director Don Sinner is awarded the 2017 Peterson-Schaubach Leadership Award, the union’s highest leadership honor.

(Middle right) The 2017 Human Rights Award winner, St. Paul elementary teacher Deidra Carlson, was honored for her work on restorative practices in her classroom and more.

(Bottom right) The 2016 Education Minnesota Education Support Professional of the Year Marcell Branch was honored at the Representative Convention for his focus on helping at-risk youth.

IMPORTANT INFORMATION FOR MEMBERS RETIRING THIS YEAR!

Register now for Education Minnesota Retired

Retired members help build unity and increase the power of Education Minnesota to represent educators and advocate for stronger public education. Now’s the time to encourage the retiring members in your local to register for Education Minnesota Retired membership. For members who meet the following criteria, there will be no additional cost for this great program.

1. Retire after September 1, 2015 (must be age 55)
2. Have been a member of Education Minnesota for at least 10 years (do not have to be consecutive)
3. Eligible to receive a pension

Retired members will have access to the benefits of retired membership, including:

- ▶ Continued access to Economic Services Inc. (ESI), NEA and AFT 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
- ▶ Maintaining Educators Employment Liability Insurance (EEL) coverage when teaching as a day-to-day substitute in all public school districts in Minnesota.

And the benefits work both ways. Retired members help Education Minnesota by using their experience in education and their flexible schedules to 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
- ▶ Covering hearings and lobbying for Education Minnesota’s legislative agenda
- ▶ And much more!

Have your retired or retiring members register today! For questions regarding Education Minnesota Retired membership, contact Matt Blewett at ESI via email or at 651-292-4877 or 800-642-4624.

State ESSA plans continue to move forward

The Minnesota Department of Education released its preliminary decisions for the state's Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) plan.

The MDE has held more than 300 meetings to shape the plan and established five committees to discuss certain areas. Education Minnesota worked hard to get educator voices at each meeting and on each committee. More than 50 educators have sat on the committees.

The plan will be released for public comment this summer. Education Minnesota will have multiple workshops regarding ESSA, and possibly even a public comment session, at Summer Seminar. The state will submit its plan to the U.S. Department of Education in September.

The accountability committee has been reviewing

indicators that will be used to prioritize support for identified schools. This is a required aspect of ESSA and is part of the overall approach to school accountability.

The five indicators established are academic achievement, academic progress, graduation rates, progress toward English language proficiency and school quality/student success. For school quality, chronic absenteeism will be used to identify schools in 2018.

The state hopes to add other areas to the school quality indicator, such as school climate, a well-rounded education and career and college readiness, but they can only be added once all students have been measured for at least a year.

The assessment committee

looked into the current testing system, including opt-outs and using a national high school test like the ACT for all students instead of other tests, but currently ESSA does not change testing.

The state hopes to continue to work on changes to assessments, using the flexibility of the law. The committee talked about shifting tests into modules where schools could test certain standards throughout the year and, over time, moving to locally created assessments to measure some standards.

The school improvement committee came up with plans for schools identified as not meeting standards.

According to the plan update, identified schools will be allowed to use the year of identification

for comprehensive needs assessments, identification of evidence-based practices, and planning. Years two and three of identification will focus on implementation.

Educators will be able to participate in the comprehensive needs assessments and be able to voice what their schools need.

The English learners committee created language to standardize a student's entry into a school's EL student group. The state hopes to continue development of statewide procedures for identifying and exiting EL students from these programs.

The educator quality committee talked about what is the definition of an effective teacher. Education Minnesota was able to provide some

influence on this discussion, bringing it back to the core of the Teacher Development and Evaluation law.

The state decided to define an "ineffective teacher" as a teacher who is not meeting professional teaching standards as defined in local teacher development and evaluation systems.

The state is also putting more emphasis on ensuring students have equitable access not only to effective and experienced teachers, but also to teachers of color and American Indian teachers.

For more information about the plan, go to <http://education.state.mn.us/MDE/dse/essa>. To learn more about how to get involved with the process, go to www.educationminnesota.org/advocacy.aspx#ESSA.

Nominations open for the 2017 ESP of the Year

Nominations are open until June 15 for the next Education Minnesota Education Support Professional of the Year.

The program honors exemplary professional and union work by an Education Minnesota member in any ESP job category.

All Education Minnesota

ESP members who have been members for at least three years as of Jan. 15 are eligible. Individuals can be nominated by anyone associated with Minnesota schools.

While ESP job categories often vary from district to district, some examples can include paraprofessional/education assistant,

secretarial/clerical, custodial, food service, maintenance and trades, transportation, groundskeeping, security, technology services, health services and others.

The ESP of the Year represents his or her peers throughout the profession and connects to communities as an ambassador.

The ESP of the Year receives a \$1,000 honorarium, an iPad and a trip to the National Education Association's Education Support Professional National Conference.

In addition to recognition at the state level, the Education Minnesota ESP of the Year represents our

union in the NEA ESP of the Year program.

To nominate a candidate for 2017 Education Minnesota ESP of the Year, go to www.educationminnesota.org/resources/esps/esp-of-the-year-nomination-form.



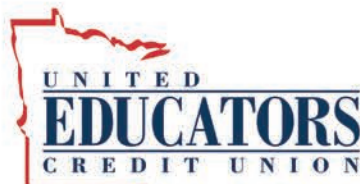
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Legislative update *from page 1*

He is now asking for a \$709 million increase in public education over the biennium. That includes \$371 million for a 2 percent annual increase in per-pupil funding, \$175 million to expand voluntary pre-K and \$2 million for full-service community schools.

To see a full breakdown of how much your school district would receive under the three funding plans, go to bit.ly/2nYha2z.

The House passed its tax bill, which includes a provision that allows individual income and corporate franchise tax credits equal to 70 percent of the amount contributed to foundations that award scholarships to students attending a nonpublic K-12 school or foundations that support one or more public schools or districts.

The House provision would reduce state revenues by almost \$30 million in the 2018-19 biennium. The bill also extends the existing K-12 education credit to nonpublic school tuition, reducing state revenues by an additional \$25 million.

“Low-income students do not need scholarships. They need fully funded public schools,” said Rep. Erin Maye Quade during the debate on the bill.

The Senate tax bill allows individual income and corporate franchise tax credits equal to 70 percent of the amount contributed to foundations that award scholarships to nonpublic K-12 students.

The Senate provision would reduce state revenues by \$35 million per taxable year beginning in 2018.

The House and the Senate also recently passed bills that would affect how teacher licensing is decided.

Senate File 4 would require teachers in the lowest tier to have a bachelor’s degree, but not teacher preparation training. This license could be renewed forever—essentially allowing someone to teach for their entire career without any classroom training.

House File 140 would give individual administrators more say over licenses and give a new kind of license to people working in schools who currently don’t meet licensing standards. That includes allowing teachers in the lowest tiers to teach for eight years without having a bachelor’s degree or any teacher preparation training.

Stay up to date on the progress at the Capitol by going to www.educationminnesota.org/policyactioncenter.

JOIN US FOR THE RALLY FOR PUBLIC EDUCATION

Join us on May 20, the final Saturday of the regular legislative session, to rally for public education.

It’s educators’ last chance to ...

- Rally for the schools our kids deserve with parents, students, community members and hundreds of educators just like you.
- Stand up for the students on the margins who need us the most.
- Tell legislators face-to-face to stop playing risky games with our children’s futures and start investing in their success.
- Support Gov. Mark Dayton in his fight for public schools and colleges.

When: Saturday, May 20 at noon. Program starts at 1 p.m.; march to the Capitol at 1:30 p.m.

Where: South lawn at Education Minnesota, 41 Sherburne Ave. in St. Paul. March to the Capitol to follow.

Education Minnesota will provide busing for Education Minnesota members and their families from hubs in St. Cloud, Owatonna, Woodbury, Edina, Coon Rapids and Apple Valley. You must pre-register for transportation.

To RSVP for the rally and transportation or get more information on the event, go to www.educationminnesota.org/advocacy/at-the-legislature/Last-Chance-Rally-for-Public-Education.

Write a note to Gov. Mark Dayton

Minnesota has a projected surplus of \$1.65 billion, but House and Senate Republicans are pushing education budgets that don’t even cover inflation. Imagine what your school could lose and tell Gov. Dayton what that would mean for you, your colleagues, your students and/or community.

How to do it

Please include the following:

- Your name, address, personal email, home phone, district/school.
- A sentence or two about why the governor’s decisions matter to you, your colleagues, your students and/or community.

Share your note on social media

- Take a picture of you with your note or a group of educators writing notes.
- Tweet the picture at your area legislators and/or send a direct message to Gov. Mark Dayton on Facebook. If you are friends with the governor on Facebook, post your picture and tag him in it.
- Use the hashtags that apply: #VoicesForKids, #EducatorVoices, #VoucherResistanceMN, #mnleg, #BelieveInWeMN.

For more information on how to send in the notes and for postage reimbursement, go to www.educationminnesota.org/advocacy/at-the-legislature/Last-Chance-Rally-for-Public-Education.



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GRADES
K-12

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mnhs.org/aied



GRADES
5-12

Primary Source Packets

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mnhs.org/edkits



GRADES
K-12

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mnhs.org/fieldtrips

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MINNESOTA
EDUCATOR

MAY 2017 | WWW.EDUCATIONMINNESOTA.ORG

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Celebrate Labor History Month

May is designated as Labor History Month and with all of the attacks on public education and unions today, it is more important than ever to remember how unions began, what they have accomplished and why they are an important tradition to continue. Minnesota has often been at the forefront of the fight for workers’ rights, but many educators don’t see the connection between the work they do now and how the history of the labor movement has helped get them to where they are today.

EDUCATION LABOR HISTORY IN MINNESOTA

1998: Education Minnesota created

- The Minnesota Education Association and Minnesota Federation of Teachers merge to form Education Minnesota, making Minnesota the first state to have a merged educators union. Today, Education Minnesota is the largest and one of the most influential unions in the state.

1984: Right to unionize

- The U.S. Supreme Court confirms the right of public employees to unionize, the right to meet and confer and the right of the union to charge a fair-share fee. Knight vs. the Minnesota Community College Faculty Association, which had been in the courts for six years, is the nation’s pivotal case on collective bargaining rights.

1974: Organizing education support professionals

- MFT begins organizing ESPs and school-related staff on the principle that all school workers deserve fair salaries and appropriate working conditions.

1971: PELRA enacted

- The Legislature enacts the Public Employee Labor Relations Act, which grants collective bargaining rights to public employees in the state. PELRA provides for teachers in each district to choose an exclusive bargaining representative, the MFT or the MEA.

1946: First teachers strike

- In October, St. Paul teachers engage in the first organized teachers strike in the nation, winning improved conditions for themselves and their students. In the strike vote, 994 teachers vote yes and six vote no. Teachers go out on the picket lines in late November, in subzero temperatures, making headlines around the world. The strike ends one month later. Minneapolis teachers take a strike vote about the same time as St. Paul, but are able to avert a strike when Minneapolis Mayor Hubert Humphrey mediates a suitable raise.

1917-19: AFT in Minnesota

- Kindergarten teacher Florence Rood convenes the Grade Teachers Organization to consider joining the newly formed American Federation of Teachers. AFT chartsers St. Paul Local 28. St. Paul’s male teachers form Local 43 in 1919. Minneapolis teachers break from the Minnesota Education Association and become AFT Local 59.

1909: First retirement funds for teachers

- Minneapolis School District establishes the Minneapolis Teachers’ Retirement Fund Association (MTRFA) for Minneapolis teachers and principals.

1861: MEA gets started

- Led by the principal of the First State Normal School in Winona, nearly 100 educators come together in Rochester to form the Minnesota State Teachers Association. The state is three years old and these early educators want to ensure that its children can receive quality education. The organization name is changed to Minnesota Education Association in 1876.

1860: Training schools for teachers

- Training schools for teachers are opened in Winona, Mankato and St. Cloud. For the first time, women in Minnesota are allowed to attend and train formally for a profession outside the home. Female teachers earn \$13 a month (\$8 less than their male counterparts) and are required to follow strict behavioral guidelines.

1847: First Minnesota teacher arrives

- Harriet Bishop travels from her home in Vermont to St. Paul, in what would become the Minnesota Territory, for a job to educate frontier children. Her first school was a converted blacksmith shop on a site now occupied by the City Hall. In addition to school reform, Bishop becomes active in other social justice issues, including temperance and women’s suffrage.

CLASSROOM RESOURCES

Not only is it important for union members to understand the history of the labor movement; it is also important for educators to teach it. Numerous resources are available online to help bring labor education into the classroom.

National Education Association online history
www.nea.org/home/1704.htm

- The four-part NEA Today series, “Answering the Call: A History of the National Education Association,” honors the legacy and impact of public education and educators in America.

American Federation of Teachers online history
www.aft.org/about/history

- The website features a history of the union, plus links to the video history series, “A Proud Tradition.”

AFL-CIO online history
www.aflcio.org/About/Our-History

- The national AFL-CIO’s website houses a large offering of labor history resources, including links to other labor education websites, key events, a labor history timeline and videos about the union’s history.

University of Minnesota Labor Education Service
<https://carlsonschool.umn.edu/faculty-research/labor-education-service>

- The University of Minnesota’s Labor Education Service provides trainings and courses for adults, as well as “labor in the schools” offerings. The program also runs the publication Workday Minnesota, which provides news and resources on the labor movement. Find out more about that publication at www.workdayminnesota.org.

U.S. labor history curriculum
www.illinoislaborhistory.org/curriculum

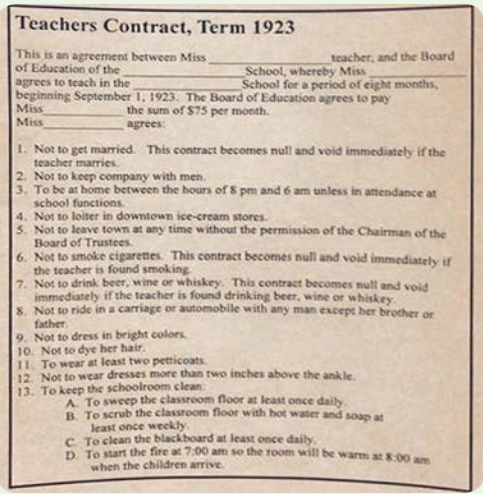
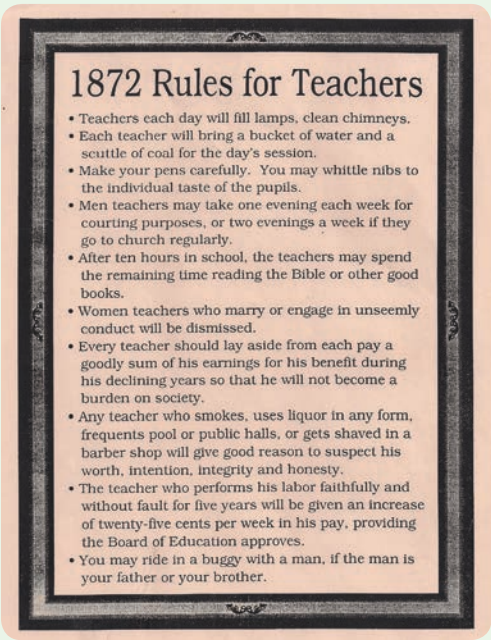
- The Illinois Labor History Society has developed curriculum for educators on our nation’s labor history, including a link to a podcast called “Labor History in 2:00.”

California Federation of Teachers labor in the schools
<http://cft.org/member-services/labor-education>

- The California Federation of Teachers has developed a site full of curricula, resources and website links for educators to use in teaching labor history.

LOOK HOW FAR WE HAVE COME

While the exact sources for these early teacher contracts and rules are unknown, they have been displayed in numerous museums and shared by multiple sources online. It’s a look back to the early days of one-room schoolhouses and life before teacher contracts as we know them.



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11 finalists named for Minnesota Teacher of the Year

Eleven teachers from across the state have been selected as finalists in the 2017 Minnesota Teacher of the Year program. An independent selection panel of 23 leaders in the areas of education, business, government and nonprofits selected the finalists from a group of 37 semifinalists. There were 132 Teacher of the Year candidates for this program year.

The selection panel meets again May 6 to conduct individual interviews with each of the finalists and to cast votes for the 2017 Minnesota Teacher of the Year.

The 2016 Minnesota Teacher of the Year, Abdul Wright of the Best Academy in Minneapolis, will announce this year's honoree at a banquet May 7 at the Radisson Blu Mall of America. Banquet tickets can be purchased at www.educationminnesota.org/news/awards/teacher-of-the-year.

Education Minnesota, the 86,000-member statewide educators union, organizes and underwrites the Teacher of the Year program. Candidates include pre-kindergarten through 12th-grade teachers from public or private schools. The Minnesota Teacher of the Year Program also receives support from the following organizations: The SMARTer Kids Foundation, the Radisson Blu Mall of America, the Harvard Club of Minnesota Foundation, United Educators Credit Union, McDonald's Restaurants of Minnesota, Educators Lifetime Solutions, EFS Advisors and Education Minnesota ESI.

2017 Minnesota Teacher of the Year finalists are:



Alison Alowonle
Excelsior Elementary
Minnetonka
Elementary, grades 4-5



Corey Bulman
Mound Westonka High School
Mound Westonka
English, grades 9, 11-12



Greta Callahan
Bethune Community School
Minneapolis
Elementary, kindergarten



Adrian Davis
Roosevelt High School
Minneapolis
Music, grades 9-12



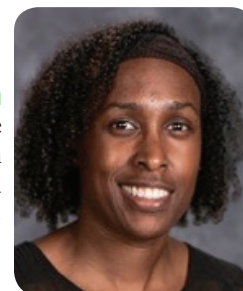
Scott Noet
Owatonna Junior High
Owatonna
Social studies, grade 7



Michael Houston
Harding High School
St. Paul
Math, grades 9-12



Teresa Stadem
Richfield College
Experience Program
Richfield
English, grades 9-12



Ong Xiong
Phalen Lake Hmong Studies
Magnet
St. Paul
Elementary, kindergarten



Sarah Swan McDonald
Northfield High School
Northfield
Social studies, grades 9-12



Mary Zilge
Cherry View Elementary
Lakeville
Vocal music, grades
kindergarten-5



2017 Minnesota
TEACHER
of the **YEAR**
53rd Anniversary

Supple, Baumann, Zins win spots on TRA board

Poll shows majority of voters feel their pension is a motivating factor to keep teaching

Mary Supple, a middle school social studies teacher in Richfield, and Will Baumann, a mathematics instructor at Ridgewater College in Willmar, were elected active-member representatives to the Teachers Retirement Association's Board of Trustees last month. They begin four year terms starting July 1.

Supple will start her third term of the board. She is a sixth-grade math

teacher at Richfield Middle School, has served as local president and lead negotiator, served on the Education Minnesota Governing Board and on the National Education Association Board of Directors.

Baumann joins the board as a new representative. He has been an active member of his local and state faculty union, participating in leadership training programs and working with legislators

to influence and shape policy. He also serves as president of the Minnesota Mathematics Association of Two-Year Colleges. He has a bachelor's degree in mathematics with minors in history and economics, a master's degree in statistics and is working on a master's degree in economics.

Also elected was the retiree-member representative, Marti Zins. Zins has served on the TRA Board since 1989

and assumed the position of board president in 2009.

Voters were also asked a poll question to help the TRA better understand its members. Out of 4,650 respondents, 78 percent of active teachers said that the TRA pension is among the motivating factors for them to continue teaching. Of 15,618 retired respondents, 70 percent said that their TRA pension was among the motivating factors that kept

them in the classroom.

The trustees meet about seven times a year to oversee the administration of the pension fund. Special meetings might be held at the call of the board president or of any three members. Board members act as fiduciaries of the TRA plan in accordance with Minnesota statute and are also subject to state economic interest disclosures.

U.S. Supreme Court raises the bar for special ed instruction

In a major special education case decided in March 2017, the U.S. Supreme Court unanimously articulated an elevated standard for determining whether a student has received a “free and appropriate public education,” known as FAPE, under the federal Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA).

The case involved a student named Andrew, who was diagnosed with autism at age 2. Andrew attended the Douglas County School District in Colorado and received special education services there through fourth grade. Dissatisfied with Andrew’s academic progress and the individualized education program (IEP) the district had proposed in fourth grade, his parents enrolled him in a private school that specializes in educating students with autism. Andrew started making significantly more behavioral and academic progress than he had made in the public school.

A year-and-a-half later, Andrew’s parents filed a complaint with the Colorado Department of Education seeking reimbursement for the private school tuition. They argued that the final IEP his public school proposed was not “reasonably calculated



David Aron

to enable him to receive educational benefits,” and therefore below the standard required by the IDEA. The administrative law judge, the district court and the Tenth Circuit Court of Appeals all held that the district did not owe compensatory education to Andrew’s parents because the district had made annual modifications in his IEP “sufficient to show minimal progress.”

Prior to this decision, many courts had agreed with the “minimal progress” standard based primarily on a 1982 Supreme Court decision interpreting the IDEA, *Board of Education v. Rowley*. In *Rowley*, the Supreme Court held that a school district had not denied FAPE to a student with a hearing impairment

by providing her with a wireless transmitter and an FM hearing aid instead of her own interpreter. The court held that the district had not violated the IDEA because Rowley continued to make academic progress equal to that of her peers despite not having the interpreter.

In *Endrew F.*, however, the record showed that the student had not made significant progress in his public school. The Supreme Court reversed the lower courts, finding that the “merely more than de minimis” standard they had set was not what the court had intended in *Rowley*. Chief Justice Roberts wrote, “a student offered an educational program providing ‘merely more than de minimis’ progress from year to year can hardly be said to have been offered an education at all.” The court held that the IDEA “requires an educational program reasonably calculated to enable a child to make progress appropriate in light of the child’s circumstances.”

The Supreme Court rejected the school district’s argument that the IDEA contains only procedural requirements—timelines, prior written notices, content requirements—to help schools and families

reach agreement on an individualized education program. Citing *Rowley*, the court held that the IDEA imposes not only procedural rights to students with disabilities, but also a substantive right to a certain level of educational benefit. In order to avoid having to pay for Endrew’s private school tuition, the court held that the school district would need to show that his IEPs included challenging goals and that the services provided allowed more than simply minimal progress toward those goals.

While the decision has rightly been hailed as a win for Endrew and students with disabilities, the court also cautioned that FAPE does not necessarily require that an IEP provide a student with educational opportunities or benefits that are identical to those that non-disabled students experience. Chief Justice Roberts notes that an “equal opportunity” standard had previously been rejected by the court in the *Rowley* decision out of concern that it would invite courts and lawyers to substitute their judgments on sound educational policy for those of educators and school officials.

In the 35 years since the *Rowley* decision, special

LEGAL BRIEFS

education attorneys and directors have often said that the IDEA requires districts to provide a “serviceable Chevy,” but not necessarily “a Cadillac,” to students with disabilities. Although *Endrew F.* does not establish a bright-line rule as to how much educational benefit a student’s IEP must provide, it likely requires school districts to ensure that the metaphorical Chevy is not only serviceable, but that it also has enough fuel to keep a student moving forward from one destination to another every year.

It is difficult to anticipate all the repercussions of this decision, but it may give parents more power in requesting services for students with disabilities that some schools have previously denied. If anything, *Endrew F.* should generate renewed urgency for the federal government to fully fund the IDEA so that school districts have the resources to provide every child with a free and appropriate public education.

♦ David Aron

Aron is an Education Minnesota staff attorney.

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EDUCATION MINNESOTA OPPORTUNITIES

SUMMER SEMINAR REGISTRATION OPENS MAY 5

The school year is beginning to wind down and educators are thinking ahead to summer. But summer also means a wonderful opportunity for professional development at Education Minnesota’s Summer Seminar.

Summer Seminar is part of the Minnesota Educator Academy and offers high-quality professional development, leadership training and networking opportunities. It will be held July 31-Aug. 2 at the College of St. Benedict in St. Joseph, Minnesota. All Education Minnesota members are invited for three days of personal and professional development, an opportunity to connect with other educators from across the state and to have fun.

This year will feature expanded course offerings, which means more professional development classes and

more ideas on how to build a strong local union. Based on member feedback, this year’s Summer Seminar will also feature more member-led courses.

A few of the new courses that will be offered this year are:

- Unionism and Professional Growth for ESPs
- MEA FIRE: Racial Equity Advocate Training
- From Exclusion to Restorative: Research Urging Us in New Directions
- Organizing for Safer Schools
- Hot Topics: Contract Language on Challenging Issues
- Building a Trauma-Informed School

Registration to attend Summer Seminar opens May 5.

Information on attending the event can be found at www.educationminnesota.org/events/summer-seminar. A poster with course offerings will be mailed to school sites in May.

The deadline to register is Wednesday, July 19.

Education Minnesota will reimburse each local, after Summer Seminar ends, for the registration cost of one member and one member of color. The registration cost of \$70 includes participant registration in courses, meals for all three days of the event and lodging in a shared double-occupancy dorm room with two single beds.

Your local president will also receive more information about Summer Seminar. Please contact your field office or Sam Jasenosky at sam.jasenosky@edmn.org for more information.

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.

activity guide, lunch and six continuing education units. Both workshops will take place at Cedar Creek Ecosystem Science Reserve in East Bethel.

For more information about the workshops or to register, go to www.dnr.state.mn.us/education/teachers/calendar.html.

Three summer economic education workshops

The Minnesota Council on Economic Education is hosting three week-long economic courses this July. “Using Children’s Literature to Teach Economics” is a two-graduate-credit course for elementary teachers July 10-14, which will cover social studies standards in economics and personal finance and provide lessons and activities. “Entrepreneurship and Design-Thinking for Teachers” will also take place July 10-14 and will focus on design thinking and lean startup methodology concepts using hands-on curriculum. “Teaching High School Economics” is also a two-graduate-credit course that helps prepare educators to teach high school economics and runs July 17-21. Registration is \$80 and participants receive a \$150 stipend. For the children’s literature and high school courses, there are also 10 \$250 travel scholarships available for teachers from high-needs districts outside the 13-county metro area.

For more information about any of the courses or to register, go to www.mcee.umn.edu/teachers/calendar.

Mark Twain teacher workshop

The Mark Twain Museum in Hannibal, Missouri, is sponsoring its 12th year of Mark Twain Teacher Workshops, July 10-14. The workshop is geared for teachers grades four through high school. This year’s focus is on Mark Twain’s short stories. Emphasis will be using Mark Twain in the classroom to stimulate students’ writing. The workshop provides the opportunity for participants to tour local sites related to Mark Twain, ride the Mark Twain Riverboat, explore the Mark Twain Cave, tour Jim’s Journey Museum, visit the Mark Twain birthplace at Florida, Missouri, and meet Hannibal’s Goodwill Ambassadors Tom and Becky. Participants can earn three hours of graduate credit from Hannibal-LaGrange University. The registration fee is \$150, with an additional cost of \$300 for the graduate credit.

For more information or to register, go to www.marktwainmuseum.org/for-teachers.

Free Holocaust studies seminar

“The Holocaust and the Meaning of Place,” an inaugural Minnesota Holocaust Educators Network Seminar will be held July 30-Aug. 5 at the University of Minnesota. Sponsored by the Olga Lengyel Institute for Holocaust Studies and Human Rights, and supported by the Minnesota Writing Project, 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 historic Dakota sites, such as Bdote, New Ulm and Mankato. Participants will receive copies of relevant texts, the Echoes & Reflections curriculum, 55 continuing education units and a \$100 stipend. Attendees will also be eligible to apply for classroom mini-grants of up to \$1,000 following completion of the seminar. Most

meals and transportation to sites will be provided.

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

Scholarships available for science, technology workshops

Each year, the Minnesota Chapter of the AVS, Science and Technology Society sends a secondary school teacher to the Science Educators Workshop at the annual AVS International Symposium. This year’s workshop will take place Oct. 30-31 in Tampa, Florida. There is a possibility that the Minnesota Chapter will send two teachers in 2017. The workshop includes training in vacuum technology, a tour of local industry and the opportunity to interact with other STEM teachers from throughout the nation. The school district where the teacher selected works will receive a vacuum trainer system. The Minnesota chapter of AVS will cover the costs of transportation, hotel, meals and possibly a substitute. The registration deadline is Aug. 15.

For more information or to apply, please go to: www.avs.org/Education-Outreach/Science-Educators-Workshop.

CLASSROOM RESOURCES

Racial equity tools, resources online

The Racial Equity Tools website is designed to support individuals and groups working to achieve racial equity. This site offers tools, research, tips, curricula and ideas for people who want to increase their own understanding and to help those working toward justice at every level—in systems, organizations, communities and the culture at large. The site offers a monthly newsletter and guidance on such topics as how to use film to deepen the conversation about race. See all of the site’s offerings at www.racialequitytools.org.

GRANTS AND AWARDS

Dollar General youth literacy grants

The Dollar General Literacy Foundation’s Youth Literacy Grants provide funding to schools, public libraries and nonprofit organizations to help students who are below grade level or experiencing difficulty reading. Grant funding is provided to assist with implementing new or expanding existing literacy programs, purchasing new technology or equipment to support literacy initiatives or purchasing books, materials or software for literacy programs. The maximum grant amount is \$4,000. The deadline to apply is May 18 and grant announcements will be made in September.

For more information about the grant program or how to apply, go to www2.dollargeneral.com/dgliteracy/Pages/grant_programs.aspx.

American Honda Foundation grants

The American Honda Foundation provides grants for youth education in STEM, the environment, job training and literacy to school districts, school sites and nonprofit organizations. Grant awards range from \$20,000 to \$75,000 over a one-year period. The next application deadline is Aug. 1.

For more information about the program or how to apply, go to www.honda.com/community/applying-for-a-grant.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Coding in the classroom summit

The MN Coding in the Classroom Leadership Cohort is hosting a MN Coding in the Classroom Summit May 16 at the University of MN Software Engineering Center, Keller Hall, Twin Cities Campus with the theme of “Take a Byte: Create, Collaborate & Innovate.” The aim of the summit is to provide a space for educators to share their knowledge, passion and resources around computer science in education through hands-on and interactive sessions. The cohort advocates for the integration of computer science across content areas as a way to build important, lifelong skills. Registration is \$75 and includes parking, lunch, light snacks, six continuing education units and a T-shirt.

For more information or to register, go to <http://codingintheclassroommn.weebly.com>.

Growth mindset math webinar

The Minnesota Department of Education and Minnesota Council of Teachers of Mathematics are hosting a free math webinar discussing teaching and assessment for a growth mindset. The webinar is designed for K-12 math teachers. Participants will be able to hear from other educators as they share their grade-level experiences working with students. Two sessions of the webinar will take place May 23—one from 2:45-3:30 p.m. and one from 3:30-4:15 p.m. The sessions are identical, but discussions will vary.

For more information or how to register, go to <http://education.state.mn.us/MDE/about/cal> and click on the link for the webinar.

Project Learning Tree, DNR summer workshops

The Minnesota Department of Natural Resources is hosting two workshops in June that focus on their Project Learning Tree (PLT) program. On June 21, educators of grades 7-12 are invited to learn about climate change and forests. The registration fee is \$20. Participants get the PLT forests and climate change secondary module, lunch and four-and-a-half continuing education units. On June 28, educators of grades K-8 are invited to a free workshop that introduces PLT environmental education lessons. Participants will get the PLT K-8