

MINNESOTA

EDUCATOR

FEBRUARY/MARCH 2020

**MINNESOTA
EDUCATORS
CONTINUE TO
#CHOOSEUNION**

**2020 LEGISLATIVE SESSION
FOCUSES ON POLICY BILLS**



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EDUCATORS AND STUDENTS



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THE VOICE FOR PROFESSIONAL
EDUCATORS AND STUDENTS

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issues and training opportunities for educators
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*COVER PHOTO: Minnesota educators have
shown their support and commitment
to the union over the past few years by
sharing their #chooseunion photos on
social media and at union events.*

READY TO FIGHT FOR FULL FUNDING

Recently, a MinnPost reporter published the worst kept secret when she quoted my tweet about our union's plans for the spring of 2021.

In an article about the upcoming session of the Legislature, she wrote, "Then there's this bit of foreshadowing, from Denise Specht, 'Education Minnesota plans to be walk-out ready by March 1, 2021. No matter what the outcome of Election 2020, we WILL be demanding full funding for public education.'"

She was right. Our union is coming together, building our strength and preparing for a mass action that will finally win the funding the students in our schools and campuses deserve.

Educators are ready. Last year, Education Minnesota hired pollsters to ask union members what they wanted and what they were willing to do to get it.

More than 70 percent of educator-members said they were ready to do more to advocate for public schools. Nearly the same percentage said they believed a statewide walkout would make a difference.

It's no wonder. As I talk to Minnesota educators, I hear the same stories: exhausted teachers leaving in the middle of the year, a mental health crisis among students and colleagues, open jobs no one will take.

All the problems go back to funding. Minnesota educators work in buildings without counselors, nurses or media specialists. In some places,

the roof leaks. In others, it's so overcrowded the students sit in hallways.

Educators everywhere struggle to support their families, pay their education debts and afford health insurance. It's tough for teachers and higher education faculty, and especially our education support professionals.

Our state can't go on like this.

Our educators need relief. The educational and socioeconomic disparities among our students and their families are unacceptable. Every student—from different places and from different races—deserves access to high-quality public schools and postsecondary education. Many aren't getting it.

The only way our students will get those educational opportunities is if enough elected leaders in the state and federal governments decide to raise and spend the money to fully fund public education.

Our problem isn't scarcity. We live in one of the wealthiest states in the richest nation in the world. Our problem is simply a lack of political will.

That's why I've said publicly that organized educators will turn out for the 2020 elections in record numbers. We will restore a pro-education majority in the Minnesota Senate to join supportive leaders in the state House and Gov. Tim Walz, a former teacher who already understands the needs.

Winning the Senate will not

be enough, though. When educators talk about fully funding public education, we're talking about raising billions of dollars from the wealthiest Minnesotans and largest corporations, the same groups that benefited from President Trump's massive tax cuts two years ago.

We plan to reshape the political landscape in a way that hasn't happened before—even when one party controlled both the legislative and executive branches. Fully funding public education will require redefining what's possible in the minds of state leaders. Even our friends might need a nudge.

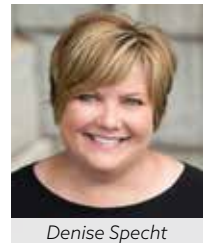
So our union is working toward being "walkout ready" in March 2021, just in case. That doesn't necessarily mean that tens of thousands of Minnesota educators will hit the streets, as our colleagues did in Arizona, Chicago, Colorado, Florida, Los Angeles, North Carolina, Oklahoma and West Virginia—but it might.

In the next few months, our members will hear more about our plans and about what they can contribute. I hope everyone will bring their voice to this effort.

Together,



Twitter: @DeniseSpecht



Denise Specht

Discounts available for members

Did you know that as an Education Minnesota member you can save on local entertainment and activities? Some discounts include:

WILD MOUNTAIN AND TAYLORS FALLS SCENIC BOAT TOURS

- Wild Mountain Waterpark, Alpine Slide and Go-Karts, and 80-minute Taylors Falls Scenic Boat Tour discounts.

NICKELODEON UNIVERSE

- 30 percent off all-day wrist bands.

BROADWAY ACROSS AMERICA

- Special pricing for Education Minnesota members.

There are also many discounts available at local and national retailers, vacation destinations and more.

Go to www.educationminnesota.org/member-benefits.aspx#your-pocketbook to see all of the offerings.

Getting social!

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



Where are you reading your Minnesota Educator?

Congratulations, Robin Botts from Elk River, for being this issue's winning submission!

We love seeing all of the places where you are reading your Minnesota Educator! See more photos on page 20.

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

Submissions are due March 6. Happy reading!



Educators in the news!

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

It was pretty quickly shared amongst educators on social media, particularly on Facebook. We had a number of educators who were trying to figure out how to best support the families displaced by the fire.

— Brionna Harder, a Minneapolis Patrick Henry High School teacher, said in a Dec. 27 Minnesota Public Radio story. Harder organized a donation drop-off location at the Minneapolis Federation of Teachers and Educational Support Professionals office after the Drake Hotel fire on Christmas Day. An estimated 50 Minneapolis students were among those displaced by the fire. The MFT took in \$10,000 worth of gift cards for the affected families.

MINNESOTA EDUCATORS CONTINUE TO CHOOSE UNION

Minnesota educators have recommitted themselves to the union in big ways in the year-and-a-half since the U.S. Supreme Court ruled in the *Janus vs. AFSCME* case.

The court decision ruled that public-sector unions could no longer collect fair-share fees, which had helped cover the union's costs of providing collective bargaining and grievance administration support to non-members.

Education Minnesota has had its membership hold steady since the decision, with many non-members changing to full members after one-on-one conversations and a renewed effort to make sure members understand the value of their union.

"It brought us together in a strong way, and it unified our union from every corner of the state," said President Denise Specht, in a Guardian article in February 2019 about the post-Janus response. "We were complacent for a while. People signed up when they were new to a school district or a building. For many educators, that was the first and last time they talked to their union—and now times are absolutely different."

WHY I #CHOOSEUNION



"I'm so excited to be a part of doing good things for the sake of our teachers, so we can do good things for our students. That's the whole point, is to be good people for these young people to be able to grow up and be good people. And I think the union helps us as teachers do that."

Sheena Tisland, Education Minnesota Red Wing



"I just had a professional development the other day where they took a piece of paper and folded it in half and ripped it. And it was pretty easy to rip, with two it's easy to rip a piece of paper. Fold it four times, a little bit tougher but still pretty easy. Then you go to eight times. It gets tough. Sixteen, even harder. Thirty-two, almost impossible. And that's what it's like to be part of a union and speak in numbers. And when we have a strong collective, we're able to be that tough so we can't get tears in us. We can keep moving forward and keep pushing the profession further, keep pushing kids further, keep pushing policy further."

Stefanie Gunderson, Education Minnesota - Howard Lake-Waverly-Winsted

EDUCATORS CHOOSE UNION

Active Professional

2017-18 Janus ruling: 67,326

2018-19 Post-Janus: 66,623

Active ESP

2017-18 Janus ruling: 8,405

2018-19 Post-Janus: 8,525

Retired

2017-18 Janus ruling: 7,776

2018-19 Post-Janus: 8,013

**18.3%
INCREASE
SINCE 2016**



"The union protects our rights as teachers. For as much as everyone wants to say we're really respected, there's a lot of ways that we get nicked-and-dimed. And I think it's really important to support our union, because they're the ones fighting for fair wages. They're the ones to protect our time off. They're the ones getting our salaries not essentially where they should be, but as high as they can get them. In other states that don't have the ability to unionize in that way, there's data that shows that they're not getting paid as they should, or anywhere close to it."

Klair Hans, Westonka Education Minnesota



"The power of the union for me, when I was speaking at the Capitol, we got to not only use our voice as ESPs, but as people of color. And actually at the same time, we got to give voice to the children. Even though the union is for the adults, for the teachers and educators, we're here for the kids."

Siara Washington, Education Minnesota Osseo ESPs



"Being a union member allows me to support my students, because it gives us the tools to come together as a whole group and do things like talk to the Legislature to make sure our kids get the proper supports that they need at school. And it also allows us to come together and talk to each other and make sure we're doing the right things within our classrooms, schools, districts and areas to make sure each kid gets what they need—and that's a good education."

Cody Shaffer, Pelican Rapids Education Association

SEN. TINA SMITH LISTENS, LEARNS FROM RICHFIELD STUDENTS

U.S. Sen. Tina Smith visited Richfield High School in early January to meet with educators and students.

Sen. Smith also answered a few questions from the Minnesota Educator before she visited with students and educators.

Minnesota Educator: As a senator on the Education Committee, what issues are really important to you, especially for Minnesota students?

Sen. Smith: To be able to serve Minnesota on the Education Committee in the Senate is a big deal for me, because I care so much about education. I think that public education is the root of all opportunity and it needs to be supported.

I have been working on things like expanding access to mental health services in schools. I have heard from so many teachers about their worries around the mental health needs of their students. I'm working on issues like lunch shaming because I know if kids don't have access to the nutrition they need, how can we expect them to learn? I also am really happy that in this last budget bill that we passed, we were able to get some significant increases in funding. There's a lot more to do, because schools don't work if they don't have the resources. Funding for special education, Title 1 funding, low-income schools, funding for teacher training and funding for education support teams – there's so much more to work on.

Minnesota Educator: Do you have a bill that you are particularly proud of?

Sen. Smith: I'm really proud of the Teacher Shortages Act that I have been working on, that has the support of teachers all over the country including in Minnesota. It is a way to help expand the diversity of teachers and also to recruit teachers into a field that is really challenging and difficult. That bill, I'm hoping, will be able to get some traction. I'm going to keep on working on it.

And then the work on mental health is really near and dear to my heart.



Sen. Tina Smith (center) met with Richfield educators and union leaders (from left) Mike Harris and Monica Byron.

Sen. Smith met with more than 80 senior students who take Mike Harris's college-level government class.

Harris, who is also Education Richfield's local union president, had the students think about themes of questions to ask. They came up with three buckets – the day-to-day job of being a senator, some of the issues from their course content and current events.

Smith also asked the students questions including how they think we can get more young people involved in voting and political engagement.

"This is so important for our country," Smith said. "I look out at all of you and I'm so interested to know what you think about this, where your minds are, where your hearts are on this. What are you thinking about as your responsibilities and obligations as a citizen and resident of this amazing, incredible and flawed country?"

One student asked, "How do you decide how you vote on a bill?"

Smith said that her job is to understand what is happening in the lives of other people, though she said she does also have a set of values and life experiences that she needs

to remain true to when she takes a vote.

"My job is to show up, listen and learn from other people," said Smith. "Just like I'm doing today."

Smith was also asked about how often she collaborates with other senators, especially those not in her designated political party.

"To get anything done, you have to collaborate," she said. "Even in this room there is a diversity of opinions. You can either look at it as, I'm going to try and convince you that I'm right, which is a debate and that's OK. But I try to take the approach of listening and coming together."

Students also wanted Smith to talk about her commitments to making sure climate change is addressed.

Smith told the students that she wants to take bold action and is part of a group of senators working on bills to address the issue, but she also asked them what they would tell a lawmaker about why it is important.



Sen. Tina Smith answered questions from Richfield High School college government students. She also asked the students questions about what they thought about today's political world.

"I would tell them that it's going to be our future that's affected," one student said. "Not theirs."

Students also asked the senator about impeachment and foreign affairs issues such as Iran.

After the session with students, Smith met with Richfield school administrators and other educators.

They discussed the district's recent building referendum win and issues around free or fee-based lunch programs.



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MENTORSHIP PROGRAM BUILDS SHARING CULTURE IN ST. FRANCIS

While the St. Francis School District's mentorship program has gone through a few changes, the core focus has remained—creating a real connection with new employees and offering leadership opportunities to established educators.

"Our goal is also to build the capacity of our teachers across the district in the mentoring role," said Linda Ericson, the district's Q Comp coordinator who runs the mentoring program. "We have the culture of 'this is what we do with our new people.'"

Ericson is a teacher on leave working on the program, which is funded through Q Comp.

"We want to build that common culture," said Ryan Fiereck, local union president and an elementary technology teacher who has gone through the mentorship program. "The Teacher Academy (the district's Q Comp, teacher-led professional development program) really aims to get everyone on the same playing field and this is part of that."

Fiereck said that union was very involved with the district being one of the first in the state to join Q Comp, and has been involved in the decisions of creating the mentorship program and making sure it is done well.

"Union leadership at its best is leading professional development and building relationships," he said. "People don't always tie that into union work."

Fiereck credits the mentorship program with getting him through his first few years of teaching in St. Francis.

"It was a really big deal to have someone to go to and answer questions," he said.

And now as a mentor, Fiereck says having that sustainable induction program is important.

"We struggle to find time to slow down and ask how I can do my job better and how can I help someone do their job better?" he said. "Even just the small stuff like making a copy or how do I request a sub, we want people know they have someone to go to and ask questions."

The district provides training and a stipend

to its mentors, who have to go through an application process to be considered.

Mentors need to apply, including having some recommendations. Once accepted, they attend a three-day training at the end of the school year. Then they commit to mentoring a new educator for their first three years.

"When we send out the link to apply, people get excited," Ericson said. "There's value in the work and being able to say you have mentor training—learning how to be a mentor and to be a leader."

While the stipend is appreciated by the members, it never makes it close to covering the amount of time they spend with their mentees, said Ericson.

"We have a lot of people trained as mentors," she said. "We want to have them trained in all the job roles—to give people mentors as close as possible to their home site and in the same role. We have found that to be the most successful. We try to have a rotation, too. People have questioned why we have such a big pool. We want to make sure that we have a pool that meets everyone's needs."

Mentors and mentees meet at the district office the week before workshops. They then spend the day together at the new educator's job site.

Mentors of first-year teachers are asked to check in with their mentees at least three to four times a trimester, said Ericson.

"We ask them to fill out a mentor log and record what's going well, what some of their questions have been," she said.

Once a trimester, there is also a big group session to review the teaching standards.

Mentors are also asked to try and do a formal observation of their mentee.

"When we have the day in August, we give them a list of things to go through and also some little things that are the big questions new people need, from where are the markers to what to wear to open house," said Ericson.

"We want our educators to have an advocate

to go to, even for something small like ordering construction paper,” Fiereck said. “Usually you don’t think about it until you need it. We want to get the best teachers out there and give them what they need when they need it.”

The new teacher mentorship program runs for their first three years, but the program doesn’t stop there.

If a teacher gets reassigned to a new building or a new position, they can activate the mentorship program again.

“When I was teaching, I moved from a special education classroom to sixth grade, and there were big differences in how the day was structured,” said Ericson. “It would have been great to have someone to talk to about my new position.”

The program hopes to help educators on a professional level, but personal relationships also form.

“The first gal that I mentored is still our art teacher,” said Ericson. “We have maintained our friendship. She still will come to me. I just love to see that she came into our district and see where she has gone. It all started with a 4th-grade teacher mentoring an art teacher.”

Fiereck said that while their district uses Q Comp to fund the program, a mentorship system like this could be implemented without that funding source.

“It’s one of the things that people are willing to put on their plate, because they know how beneficial it is,” said Ericson.

Components of St. Francis’ mentoring program

- ▶ ***Assigned mentors for first three years in the district.***
- ▶ ***Mentors have to apply, including providing recommendations.***
- ▶ ***Mentors go through a three-day training.***
- ▶ ***Mentors and mentees spend a full day together before workshop week.***
- ▶ ***Mentors and mentees are asked to meet three to four times a trimester.***
- ▶ ***Mentors fill out a log to track what’s going well and what have been the biggest questions from their mentee.***
- ▶ ***Mentors received stipends, funded by Q Comp.***
- ▶ ***Teachers can reactivate the program if they move buildings or positions.***

SEBEKA BAND STUDENTS TEAM UP WITH ROCK STARS

Dave Kerkvliet has been teaching band for 24 years, but has been a musician and fan of rock bands for his entire life. Recently he was able to connect those two passions in a very big way.

"I'm a 311 fan," Kerkvliet said. "They've been around for 30 years and been able to maintain a level of success. I've been going to more shows and have connected with the band a bit."

So when Kerkvliet heard 311 was playing a show at the Armory in Minneapolis, he had an idea.

"I got in contact with them and invited them to our band concert the night before in Sebeka. They couldn't make it, but invited us to come down and have students meet with them before the show."

The band has partnerships with Plus 1 and VH1 Save the Music, so it was an easy connection for them to want to partner with a local school.

Kerkvliet picked four students to go with him, along with their parents.

"The band put us on the guest list and gave us tickets," he said. "They brought us backstage during the opening acts and scheduled a half-hour conversation for us. We talked for more than 50 minutes, and only ended because they had to go on stage."

The students met with lead singer and guitarist Nick Hexum and drummer Chad Sexton.

Kerkvliet assigned the students to draft their questions and submit them ahead of time.

The students asked about how they stay together, what touring is like, how they got discovered, what working with and without a record label is like, how they write songs and how important school music programs were in their lives.

Hexum and Sexton met in their high school band, Kerkvliet said.

"They explained that program was huge in getting them into music," he said. "Without that, they said things would have ended up differently."

Kerkvliet tried to pick students who had an interest in rock music and who were part of



Sebeka band students along with 311 band members before their show at the Minneapolis Armory in December. (From left) Tim Kerkvliet (Dave's brother who helped with recording), Nick Hexum (311 lead singer and guitarist), Brandon Nims (Sebeka junior), Chad Sexton (311 drummer), Nicole Crider (senior), Dave Kerkvliet (Sebeka band director), Julia Keddy (8th grader), and Rebecca Keddy (8th grader).

his independent study classes on recording music and learning multiple instruments.

"I knew I would have a lot of students upset," he said. "But we recorded the interview and played it back during the next class. Nick and Chad gave a video shoutout to the rest of the kids."

Kerkvliet also used his school's vinyl printer to make banners that showed the band and school logos. The band students all signed one banner to give to the band and 311 signed another one, which is now hanging in the band room.

VH1 and 311 both shared out the photos with the group and the banners on social media.

"The band feels really special to have this exposure," Kerkvliet said. "It's all about motivating them with the art that you're creating, the choices of music."

Kerkvliet has 230 of Sebeka's 500 students in his 5-12 band program.

"We have to have positive activities that kids enjoy and get them excited," he said.

While this was a great experience for his students, it was also a once-in-a-lifetime for Kerkvliet as an educator and as a 311 fan.

"It started out as a fun request. The biggest thought it my head was that I used it to tell the kids in a small school that you never know what's possible until you ask," he said.

REA PROGRAM IN THIRD YEAR OF EQUITY-FOCUSED ADVOCACY

Education Minnesota's Racial Equity Advocate program is now in its third year of training members to serve as an ally and resource in developing an anti-racism growth mindset in local unions and school districts.

"REA was an opportunity that opened doors for me," said Natalia Benjamin, an English Language Learner teacher in Rochester who participated in the second cohort. "Professionally, it gave me knowledge and tools I could use to advocate for students, and to promote curriculum that teaches all students. The network of other educators that now are a support group is the best resource for educators in Minnesota. The REA cohort allowed me to connect with educators all over the state and to become more active with the union. It has also opened doors to other professional development through Education Minnesota and the NEA."

Each year, the cohort meets as a group four

times. But members are encouraged to collaborate throughout the year and also work on ideas that they can bring back to their local unions and school districts.

"We started with a (restorative) circle in cohort 2," said Jason Ortiz-Crespin, a teacher in Burnsville.

"I started a circle pilot program in my school district. I'm piloting it in my classroom and I have psychologists and admins come in and observe it and give feedback. I'm a special education teacher. It's hard to get my population of students to share out. I hope to grow this now that it's becoming more known. I'm getting more help from my union and doing more research on it."

Applications for the next year's cohort open at the end of the summer or early fall. Learn more about the program and when the application window opens at www.educationminnesota.org/resources/minnesota-educator-academy/MEA-Fire.

ATTEND PRECINCT CAUCUSES FEB. 25, VOTE IN PRIMARY MARCH 3

Minnesota's major political parties—Democratic-Farmer-Labor and Republican—will hold precinct caucuses at 7 p.m. Feb. 25. This is the first year Minnesota will also have a separate presidential primary election on March 3. Early voting is already open. Find out more at www.mnvotes.org.

Education Minnesota encourages its members to attend caucuses and support your schools and students by promoting pro-public education legislation and candidates.

Precinct caucuses are also the first step in becoming a national delegate to your party's convention.

You can find information on where your precinct caucus is located at the Minnesota Secretary of State's website, www.mnvotes.org. You may also contact the DFL at 651-293-1200 or www.dfl.org or the Republican Party at 651-222-0022 or www.mngop.com.

Education Minnesota's 2020 Precinct Caucus Resolutions

Education Minnesota encourages members to bring the pro-public education and fully funding education resolutions to the caucuses and move them for approval. If passed, these resolutions will help shape the platforms of Minnesota's political parties. Watch for these resolutions to be shared on www.educationminnesota.org.

National delegate selection

As experts in education and champions for children, educators are strong choices as delegates to presidential conventions.

Funding opportunities may be available. Want more information or help on the process? Contact Kathi Micheletti in Education Minnesota's public affairs department at Kathi.micheletti@edmn.org.

MINNESOTA EDUCATORS RECEIVE NATIONAL BOARD CERTIFICATION

This December, 11 Education Minnesota members became the state's newest National Board Certified Teachers.

National Board Certification is available in 25 areas structured around 16 different disciplines and six student developmental levels (early childhood, middle childhood, early and middle childhood, early adolescence, adolescence and young adulthood, early childhood through young adulthood).

Applicants work on four components to show their content knowledge, differentiation in instruction, teaching practice and learning environments and that they are an effective and reflective practitioner.

"It is really the best form of professional development you can do," said Ben Lathrop, a teacher at Harding High School in St. Paul who was certified last year and is now a National Board Fellow working with the national program as well as the state network. "This gave me something to work toward and the tools to put things into practice that I knew I should be doing but hadn't found the time. You're working with your own students, in your own classroom, doing things you've always wanted to do."

Minnesota's National Board Certified Teacher Network works to connect certified teachers, as well as support candidates, including sessions for candidates to receive help on their components.

To learn more about National Board Certification or the Minnesota network, go to www.educationminnesota.org/resources/National-board-certification.

Congratulations to Minnesota's newest National Board Certified Teachers:

Amanda Aiken, Minnetonka

*Social Studies-History/Adolescence
And Young Adulthood*

Andrea Butler, Mounds View

Mathematics/Adolescence And Young Adulthood

Heather Klug, Osseo

*World Languages/Early Adolescence Through
Young Adulthood*

Charlotte Murphy

Art/Early And Middle Childhood

Lori Ringen, Rochester

Music/Early Adolescence Through Young Adulthood

Anna Schoeneberger, Minnetonka

Science/Early Adolescence

Brandy Siddiqui, Minneapolis

*Social Studies-History/Adolescence
And Young Adulthood*

Kelly Stroeing, Rochester

Generalist/Middle Childhood

Laura Willis, Rochester

Generalist/Middle Childhood

Amanda Zamilpa, Minnetonka

Generalist/Middle Childhood

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SESSION TO FOCUS ON POLICY ISSUES

The 2020 Minnesota legislative session begins Feb. 11, and while it's not a budgeting year, there will be plenty of policy bills and some funding debates.

The state reported a \$1 billion budget surplus this December, which could be used this session to fund education proposals not addressed last year.

"One of the best investments of this larger-than-expected surplus is in a place Minnesotans clearly support—our public schools," Education Minnesota President Denise Specht said, after the surplus number was released.

Specht outlined specific ways some of the surplus could be invested:

- Expand training and encourage retention of Minnesota's education support professionals, the educators who hold our schools together.
- Broaden access to full-service community schools, which are a proven way to help students achieve in school. This concept puts social, medical and before- and after-school academic services and enrichment activities where they are most accessible—on the school campus.
- Fully fund the Teachers of Color Act, sponsored by the Coalition to Increase Teachers of Color and American Indian Teachers in Minnesota, which includes increasing starting salaries and creating loan forgiveness and mentorship programs.
- Strengthen mental health supports for our students, including restoring student support staff cuts, adding more counselors, social workers, psychologists, nurses and other job classifications back into our schools.

These investments represent a good first step toward fully funding our schools, which needs to happen in the next budget cycle with the 2021 legislative session, Specht said.

"The chronic underfunding of public education in Minnesota demands billions of dollars in new investments to guarantee every Minnesota student—no matter what they look like or where they live—has an equitable opportunity for a great education," Specht said.

Education Minnesota will also be working on fixing the tiered-licensure system and

expanding worker freedoms this session.

In 2017, state lawmakers drastically reduced the requirements to teach in Minnesota classrooms. The bill that will be pushed this session restores Minnesota's high standards for a teaching license; elevates teachers and keeps them in the classroom; and honors teacher preparation while recognizing different pathways into teaching.

The union will also be pushing for workplace protections for educators and protections for the education profession.

Education Minnesota is working on the following:

- Expanding the list of mandatory subjects of bargaining to include things like class sizes and setting safe student-to-staff ratios for ESPs who work with students.
- Amending the tiered licensure law to include Tier 1 teachers in the teacher bargaining unit.
- Ensuring all early childhood positions in public schools require licensure, and therefore guarantee that the educators in these positions have collective bargaining rights and the opportunity to earn tenure or continuing contract rights.
- Deleting the exclusion of ECFE and ABE teachers from coverage under the continuing contract and tenure rights laws.

Educators should get to know the names of the chairs of the education committees. It is the job of each committee to hold public hearings on bills, put each bill into its best form and to recommend only those bills that the committee feels merit further consideration. Committee chairs can control who is able to testify and the overall discussion of a bill.

Senate E-12 Finance and Policy Chair:

Carla Nelson, R-Rochester

House Education Finance Chair: Jim

Davnie, DFL-Minneapolis

House Education Policy Chair: Cheryl

Youakim, DFL-Hopkins

ESP MEMBER LEADS HOUSE EDUCATION POLICY COMMITTEE

Cheryl Youakim is a paraprofessional in St. Louis Park and member of Education Minnesota-Support Personnel Assisting and Reaching Kids (SPARK) local union. She is in her third term, representing Hopkins and House District 46B. Ahead of the legislative session, Youakim talked with the Minnesota Educator about being an ESP member and a legislator.

Minnesota Educator: How long have you worked in education?

Cheryl Youakim: I had started volunteering in schools in 2003 when my kids were little. Then I started working in schools and was a substitute para and early childhood assistant. I decided to run for city council and worked as a legislative assistant, but I was also on the Hopkins Legislative Action Coalition pushing for school funding. In 2014, I decided to run for the House. I won, but it gave me an opportunity to find a job for the other half of the year and I wanted to get back into the classroom.

My first job was as a paraprofessional at Hopkins High School. Then I worked as an early childhood special ed para. Now I work in St. Louis Park Schools with special education students.

Minnesota Educator: How do you use that experience in your legislative work?

Youakim: It's been absolutely invaluable to me to be in the classroom and have that experience when I craft policy. It gives me a great insight into the opportunities and challenges in our schools as I am crafting legislation and as we discuss other bills. I can tap into the experience of people on the front lines.

Minnesota Educator: As an educator, what does it mean for you to chair the Education Policy Committee?

Youakim: My first four years I served on a variety committees. After nine years on city council, I wanted to stay in that city government realm. My husband has been a teacher, so we talk a lot about education at home and I wanted to learn more about other areas.

After 2018, Speaker Hortman asked me if I wanted to chair the Ed Policy and I said absolutely. I'm also on the Ed Finance Committee.

We only have so many spots on the education committees, but I always tell new legislators that you better be talking about education on all your committees. Education affects everything from transportation to taxes. The more we have the lens of our children on all our committees, the better off we'll be.

Minnesota Educator: What would you say to educators, especially ESPs, as to why politics is a part of their jobs?

Youakim: Politics is how we make our communities a better place. Whether it be joining a union, supporting a school board candidate who shares your views, or joining your school or city commission, we always need your voice at the table talking about kids.

Minnesota Educator: What can people look for this session?

Youakim: I've been talking with people on my committee as we prepare for session. We will be looking at mental health and safety in our schools, looking at the opportunity gap, and looking at our school community as a whole, including training for paras.



Rep. Cheryl Youakim is a paraprofessional in St. Louis Park and chairs the House Education Policy Committee.

ESP BILL OF RIGHTS A KEY PART OF 2020 LEGISLATIVE AGENDA

Everyone who works in public education deserves the same things. Respect for their contribution to the care and education of our students. Fair compensation for their work, including affordable health care. Safe working conditions. Unfortunately, most education support professionals don't get enough of any of those.

Education Minnesota has drafted an ESP Bill of Rights to build up and support education support professionals throughout Minnesota. With 2020 being a policy-focused legislative session, the union hopes to push key parts of this package of proposals to have hearings and receive attention.

The Bill of Rights includes proposals that would help ESPs in Minnesota receive pay and benefits to sustain a family, safe work environments and voice and respect on the job.

Pay and benefits to sustain families

Every school employee should have the right to spend time at home with their own children, without surviving paycheck-to-paycheck and working two or three extra jobs.

- Require school districts and charter schools to pay their ESPs a living wage.
- Help educators and their families get quality, affordable health care by allowing any Minnesotan to buy into MinnesotaCare and supporting an innovative, cost-sharing initiative called the Educator Health Care Initiative.
- Provide up to 12 weeks of paid family and medical leave for all workers through a payroll deduction and employer tax. No one should have to make the choice between losing a paycheck or caring for a new child, themselves, or an aging loved one.

Safe work environments

Many of our ESPs are working with students with disruptive and sometimes violent behavior. Just like every student deserves a safe learning environment, every educator deserves a safe working environment.

Fund 16 hours of mandatory training for paraprofessionals who directly work with students before students report every fall.

Voice and respect on the job

ESPs work closely with our students inside and outside the classroom. They should have a seat at the table when decisions are made about their schools and profession.

- Establish reporting and transparency requirements to identify issues of concern for ESPs on the worksite. This could include staffing levels, pay scale, safety, fair scheduling, etc.
- Ensure ESPs have a voice in their local school district's policies and decisions by requiring representation on district committees. (Demand at the bargaining table)

Help us push for ESP issues at the Capitol

Sign our petition to urge the Minnesota Legislature to pass the ESP Bill of Rights benefiting education support professionals in Minnesota.

Go to www.educationminnesota.org/resources/esps/Bill-of-Rights to learn more about the bill and to sign the petition.

All ESP members are encouraged to come to the Capitol and share their story at a lobby day. If you are an ESP member interested in testifying on these issues, email lobbyteam@edmn.org.

HOW TO STAY INFORMED, GET INVOLVED THIS LEGISLATIVE SESSION

Now more than ever, educators need to have their voices heard so that our priorities of strong public schools and support for students remain priorities for our legislators. Educators are the most effective advocates for public schools. The decisions state legislators make affect members' classrooms, schools and the education profession in general.

Share your story at a lobby day

All local unions or member groups can sign up for a lobby day. Education Minnesota will set up appointments with the legislators in your area and provide resources for how to share your story effectively. Substitute, mileage and food reimbursements are available. For more information, go to www.educationminnesota.org/advocacy/at-the-legislature/details-on-lobby-days.

Meet with legislators when they are back in their district

While most of the policy takes shape at the Capitol, legislators are often back in the districts they represent. Watch your legislators' schedules to see when they are in the district and if they are having any public meetings. Invite your local legislator to your school, campuses and classroom. The more they can see and hear about what is going on in their local schools, the more likely they might be to fight for what you need. If locals or members want to schedule a formal meeting with the legislator while they are in the district, contact your Education Minnesota field staff.

Raise your voice by testifying at a hearing

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

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

Education Minnesota has lobbyists who spend their time fighting for public education and educators every day. But we still want to hear from you! Contact lobbyteam@edmn.org if there is something you care about that you would like us to fight for. Education Minnesota's legislative agenda is an overarching vision of what the organization believes the Legislature should do to ensure Minnesota has the best learning and working conditions in its public schools. Read our full legislative agenda at www.educationminnesota.org/advocacy/at-the-legislature.

Read the Capitol Connection e-newsletter

Every Monday during the legislative session, Education Minnesota sends an e-newsletter called Capitol Connection to all members. Capitol Connection summarizes the most recent actions affecting public education at the Legislature, and looks ahead to upcoming activities. If you're a member and don't receive Capitol Connection but would like to, contact webmaster@edmn.org and put Capitol Connection in the subject line.

Connect with Hustle text alerts

Education Minnesota uses the texting platform, Hustle, which is a peer-to-peer mobile texting app. If you have given Education Minnesota your cellphone number, you may start receiving texts in regards to legislative issues that need your attention or action. If you receive a text, you will be able to write back and engage in a conversation about how to get involved and active.

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DELEGATE SELECTION UNDERWAY FOR 2020 REP. CONVENTION

Plans are underway for the 2020 Education Minnesota Representative Convention, taking place April 24-25 at the DoubleTree by Hilton Bloomington. Represent your colleagues on issues that affect all educators by seeking a post as a delegate or alternate.

Major business for delegates includes acting on changes to the union's constitution and bylaws and considering any action items or proposed amendments to the legislative positions and the statements of principle. This year, delegates will also elect statewide and regional members to Education Minnesota's Governing Board, as well as a National Education Association Director.

March 20 is the deadline for local presidents to inform Education Minnesota of those who will be delegates and alternates to the RC. The number of delegates allocated to each local and statewide affiliate is determined by the number of members. Delegates are chosen by open nominations and secret ballot. Interested members should contact their local president for details on how to participate.

Education Minnesota provides one standard hotel room for one night for each local sending at least one delegate and one round-trip mileage reimbursement per delegate. Local presidents have details on the financial arrangements and hotel reservations.

APPLY FOR FUNDING TO ATTEND THE AFT CONVENTION

The American Federation of Teachers will hold its biennial convention July 27-30 at the George R. Brown Convention Center in Houston.

The biennial AFT convention is the most important policymaking body for the union. Delegates will consider an array of issues through resolutions as well as constitution and bylaw measures.

Delegates also will elect the AFT president, secretary-treasurer, executive vice president and the vice presidents for the national union.

Education Minnesota will provide funding for one local delegate from each election district, one ESP local delegate, and one Higher Ed local delegate (total of 28 funded delegates).

Local presidents will receive an information packet from the AFT that includes a tentative schedule, hotel information and conference forms.

To be eligible, local delegates must first be elected from their local. Local members who would like to apply for state funding should go online to <https://edmn.me/AFTConvention20> and complete the funding interest form by March 6.

Names of state funded local delegates will be selected by a drawing on March 13. Funding includes airfare, hotel accommodations, meals along with additional convention expenses.

For questions on state funding, contact Jessica Schmidt at 800-652-9073 ext. 4867, 651-292-4867 or jessica.schmidt@edmn.org.

2020 AFT CONVENTION **July 27-30, Houston**

To be considered for state funding, please fill out the Funding Interest Form at <https://edmn.me/AFTConvention20>.

Forms must be submitted by Friday, March 6.

Selection will be made Friday, March 13.

If you have problems with the online form, please contact Jessica Schmidt at jessica.schmidt@edmn.org or 651-292-4867 or 800-652-9073, ext. 4867.

Professional development

MATH EDUCATORS LEADERSHIP SERIES

The Minnesota Council of Teachers of Math and the Minnesota Department of Education are hosting a leadership series for math educators, teams and administrators. The second session will take place Feb. 18 at the Minnesota Department of Education's offices in Roseville. Participants can attend this session without having attended the first of the series. Marcy Wood, Ph.D., will lead the session where participants will discover different tools for supporting student learning through group interactions and explore the use of norms and roles and how to teach these skills to students. The registration fee of \$175 includes lunch and a copy of the book, "Designing Groupwork: Strategies for the Heterogeneous Classroom." For more information or to register, go to mctm.org.

FREE HOLOCAUST STUDIES SEMINAR

"Honoring Resilience: Learning From The Holocaust and the Dakota Exile" will be held July 12-18 at St. Cloud State University. Sponsored by The Olga Lengyel Institute for Holocaust Studies and Human Rights, with additional support provided by Mt. Zion Temple, Jewish Community Relations Council, and the Center for Holocaust and Genocide Education at SCSU, the seminar is free of charge to participants. Attendees will explore lessons and activities for teaching about the Holocaust and Minnesota's Dakota exile through personal testimonies and place-based experiences, including day trips to Mount Zion Temple and Dakota sites such as Oheyawahi (near Pilot Knob). Participants will receive copies of relevant texts, other resources, and 65 continuing education units. Attendees will also be eligible to apply for classroom mini-grants of up to \$1,000 following completion of the seminar. For more information or to apply, go to www.toli.us/satellite-program/st-paul.

Classroom resources

HIGH SCHOOL DESIGN COMPETITION

Cooper Hewitt and the Smithsonian Design Museum recently launched its fifth annual National High School Design Competition, challenging teens with: What would you design to help more of us feel included? Entries due on Feb. 10, and prizes include trips to New York City and

Minneapolis to participate in various mentoring activities, and more. Visit www.cooperhewitt.org/designcompetition for further details.

FREE DOWNLOADABLE WOMEN'S HISTORY CIVIC CALENDAR

As 2020 marks the 100th anniversary of the ratification of the 19th Amendment to the Constitution, which states that the right to vote cannot be denied on the basis of sex, the National Constitution Center's 2020 Civic Calendar celebrates women's history. The images and quotations featured in the calendar highlight just some of the many extraordinary women who have impacted constitutional history. The National Constitution Center also offers multiple educational resources, such as lesson plans, classroom exchange programs, videos, podcasts and other multimedia resources. To download the calendar or learn more, go to constitutioncenter.org/learn/civic-calendar/2020-civic-holiday-calendar.

Grants

MILL CITY MUSEUM FIELD TRIP GRANTS

Through the support of The McKnight Foundation, Mill City Museum is able to offer free museum admission and partially subsidized busing for students from qualified public schools. To qualify, you must be a public school in the Twin Cities seven-county metro area, have 50 percent or more of students enrolled in the federal free and reduced lunch program, and visit the museum in January, February or March. Registration is now open and funding is limited. For more information and to fill out an application, visit <http://education.mnhs.org/mcknight-foundation-scholarship>.

HIGH SCHOOL CHEMISTRY GRANTS

The American Chemical Society offers funding for students and high school teachers to advance the chemical sciences. The ACS offers grants for chemistry club activities and paid summer laboratory research opportunities for students. They also offer scholarships for students pursuing a chemistry teaching career. The ACS also offers professional development and classroom equipment grants for current high school chemistry teachers. To see all of the grant and scholarship opportunities, go to www.acs.org/content/acs/en/funding-and-awards/hachprograms.html.

Education Minnesota Foundation spring professional development grant deadlines approaching

Applications for the second round of professional development grants, as well as science educator grants and second-year classroom grants, from the Education Minnesota Foundation for Excellence in Teaching and Learning are due April 3.

Professional development grants are intended to provide education support professionals, higher education faculty of colleges and universities, and teachers with opportunities to take the lead in acquiring and sharing new skills and knowledge.

These skills might include new instructional ideas, technology, working with parents, attending a conference, etc. Members may request a grant to acquire these skills and share your new learnings with your colleagues.

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

In addition to professional development grants for individual members, the foundation also offers applicants the opportunity to submit a professional development grant application for a group of members to either attend professional development or be trained at their worksite.

Professional development grants are awarded twice per school year — once in the fall and once in the spring.

Second-year classroom grant applications are also due April 3. This grant is intended for previous classroom-focused grant recipients who wish to expand on their original objectives, and who have the potential to realize additional goals based on the learning and outcomes of their first grant. Members may request up to \$3,000.

The Bruce Vento Science Educator Grant supports educators who teach science as part of their day and want to acquire and share new skills and knowledge. This grant is also awarded twice a year and may also fund equipment or materials needed in science classrooms.

To learn more about the grants and how to apply, go to www.edmnfoundation.org.

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



Sandy Novitzki, Retired

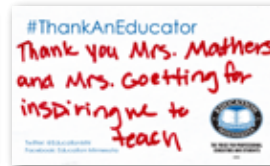
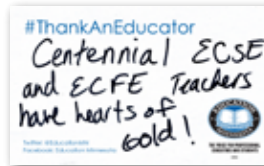
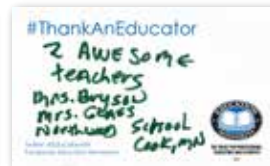
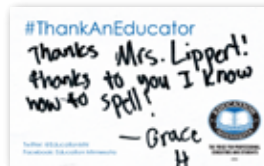
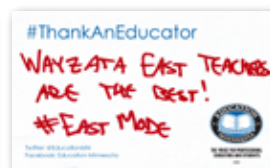
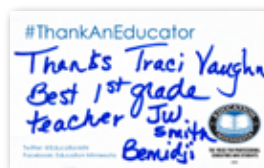


Dawn Sorenson, Minnetonka

#Thank an educator!

Education Minnesota hosts a booth at the Minnesota State Fair, where people could receive a free photo calendar as well as thank educators who were influential in their lives on Post-it notes.

We will feature a selection of these notes in each issue of the Minnesota Educator this year. Keep an eye out for your name!



MEMBERS WANT TO KNOW

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Caregiving can take a toll on your loved ones

Physical toll

- Caregivers are two times more likely to develop a chronic illness.¹
- The stress of family care responsibilities has been shown to adversely impact a caregiver's immune system for up to three years after such care ends.¹
- The stress of caregiving can decrease life expectancy by up to 10 years.¹

Financial toll

- Family caregivers incur \$8,080 in average out-of-pocket costs.²
- Nearly one in four respondents feel that out-of-pocket costs could have been avoided if care was received sooner.²
- Caregivers spend an average of 20+ hours per week providing care; one-third provide more than 30 hours per week.³
- Alzheimer's and dementia can triple healthcare needs for those over age 65.¹

Emotional toll

- Almost two-thirds of caregivers and care recipients without long term care insurance believe that recipients would have benefited from owning long term care insurance. The top three benefits identified were; relief from the financial burden of long term care, less strain on the family and a higher level of care.²
- Family caregiving spouses experience symptoms of depression or anxiety at a rate of six times higher than non-caregivers.¹
- Family caregivers caring for a parent experience symptoms of depression or anxiety at a rate that is twice as high as non-caregivers.¹

Educators Lifetime Solutions is the ESI Member Benefits sponsored long-term care insurance solution provider for Education Minnesota members and their families. We will work with you to uncover your family's specific needs and provide a complete range of long term care solutions. Special discounts have been negotiated with some insurers specifically for Education Minnesota members, as well as their extended families.



ESI

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esi.educationminnesota.org esi@edmn.org

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1. National Family Caregivers Association
2. Genworth Beyond Dementia study, March 2013
3. Caregiver Action Network, November 2014



THE VOICE FOR PROFESSIONAL
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Education Minnesota
41 Sherburne Ave.
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Foundation program works to build collaboration with districts

The Education Minnesota Foundation for Excellence in Teaching and Learning has a unique opportunity for districts and local unions to come together through its Collaboration Lab.

Through the Collaboration Lab, the Education Minnesota Foundation will work with a district's administration and staff to build positive relationships between staff and management to:

- ▶ *Create systems and structures that support collaboration, deepen understanding of stakeholders, and provide honest feedback that can lead to better outcomes for a specific project.*
- ▶ *Support sustainability of these systems and structures so that there is collaboration that takes place regardless of the personalities of specific individuals in leadership.*
- ▶ *Reach positive outcomes on a shared goal, project or objective.*

For more information, go to
www.edmnfoundation.org/collaboration-lab.

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