

MINNESOTA

EDUCATOR

APRIL/MAY 2020

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EDUCATORS STRIKE
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THE VOICE FOR PROFESSIONAL
EDUCATORS AND STUDENTS

April/May 2020 – Volume 22, No. 5

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Email: educator@edmn.org

Mail: Minnesota Educator

41 Sherburne Ave.

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Email: membership@edmn.org

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

To inquire about advertising in the Educator or on the website:

Email: matt.blewett@edmn.org

Phone: 651-292-4829

For general inquiries and business at the state headquarters:

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The Minnesota Educator is published for members to share news about education issues and training opportunities for educators as well as union and political news that affects public education in Minnesota.

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COVER PHOTO: Saint Paul Federation of Educators gather in Rice Park March 11 as part of their three-day strike to fight for more mental health supports and more staffing to better help students achieve.

OUTBREAK SHOWS THE WORLD PUBLIC SCHOOLS ARE CRUCIAL FOR COMMUNITIES

The coronavirus outbreak is teaching the public something educators have known for a long time. Our schools serve a role far beyond preparing students for standardized tests and adding data points to the state's graduation rate, despite what the critics say.

Minnesota's public schools provide a free or reduced-price lunch to nearly 320,000 children every day during the school year. That's nearly four out of 10 students. Most of them get breakfast, too. Our schools served up to 13,000 homeless and highly-mobile students last year. That's nearly the population of Worthington.

Our worksites are often the only place students can talk to a licensed counselor, psychologist, therapist or nurse—and they need it. Rates of depression and other long-term mental health issues were trending up again in the 2019 Minnesota Student Survey; nearly 25 percent of 11th graders reported seriously considering suicide.

Educators of color say that in addition to preparing and presenting great lessons, they're often the only educator in their building who looks like their students of color. Those educators then become the adult students trust to fix the racist policies and behavior those students encounter inside and outside the building. It's become yet another part of the job, albeit an exhausting one and a reason schools often fail to retain black,

brown and indigenous educators.

As I write this, Gov. Tim Walz and Minnesota Department of Education Commissioner Mary Cathryn Ricker have directed all K-12 schools to close their doors to students until March 27 so educators can convert their lessons to distance learning. The MDE's latest guidance to superintendents speaks to how much educators really do.

The document in front of me tells schools to prepare for eight weeks of "lessons delivered equitably for every student – those with IEPs and 504 Plans, those learning English as a new language, those who are experiencing homelessness, those who need mental health supports, all while determining and communicating with students and families how you are going to take attendance and distribute school meals daily."

In that document, 10 of the 17 bullet points had little or nothing to do with the narrow, academics-only view of schools. It's a recognition that educators are now on the frontlines of fighting hunger, homelessness, desperation and structural racism.

We're asked to patch the holes in the social fabric of our state faster than the wealthy few and the politicians they pay for can tear it apart. With insufficient resources and unreasonable expectations, educators are trying to overcome racial disparities in housing, health

care, criminal justice and an economy rigged for the largest corporations and wealthiest few. Our struggle is measured in "opportunity gaps."

If there can be an unseen benefit to a pandemic, and I'm not sure there is, it would be this.

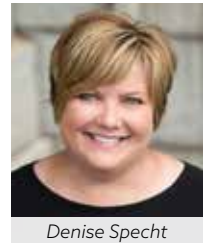
Even the critics see that no matter what we look like, where we live or how much money we have, the fear of getting sick reminds us that we're all human. Through the lens of shared humanity, more people see that for too long we've let a powerful few divide us along lines of race, geography and religion to pad their pockets and refuse to pay their fair share for the institutions that benefit everyone.

Minnesotans will emerge from this crisis ready to come together across our differences and make policy choices that help everyday people. As individuals, we can wash our hands, hunker down at home and check in with our neighbors. As a united force, we can demand our elected representatives do everything possible to protect everyone's health, fully fund the public schools and create an economy that works for everyone, no exceptions.

Together,



Twitter: @DeniseSpecht



Denise Specht

Log into our website!

Education Minnesota's website features a wealth of information for our members and the public, but there is also a members-only section which includes discounts, internal governance, member engagement and union leadership resources and more.

NEVER LOGGED IN BEFORE? IT'S EASY!

Go to www.educationminnesota.org and click on "Member Sign In" in the upper right-hand corner.

Either log in with your existing username and password, if you have registered on our site, or click on "New to our site? Register here!"

Members will need to put in their Member ID number and find their local name from the dropdown menu. A Member ID look-up function is also available.

Once you logged in, you will be able to see the member portal. If you have trouble registering, call us at 800-652-9073 or 651-292-482 or email matt.blewett@edmn.org.

Where are you reading your Minnesota Educator?

Congratulations, Dan Rassier from ROCORI, 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 May 8. Happy reading!



Getting social!

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



Educators in the news!

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

I would also hope they would value and prioritize creating an equitable and enticing working space for their employees, who are the ones responsible for delivering that high-quality education and programming to their students.

Wendy Drugge, Burnsville Education Association president, in a Savage Pacer article "Unsettled teacher contract could mean more Burnsville-Eagan-Savage cuts" on Feb. 25. Drugge was asked why the union was asking for more money than the district had budgeted for, which was a 1 percent increase each year.

SAINT PAUL FEDERATION OF EDUCATORS STRIKE FOR THREE DAYS, GET ADDITIONAL STUDENT SUPPORTS

Members of the Saint Paul Federation of Educators went on strike March 10-12 after nine months of negotiations with the district, including more than 45 hours in the four days leading up to the strike.

"Unfortunately, after more than nine months and marathon bargaining over the weekend, district leaders weren't willing to move on the issues educators and parents know will help students thrive and break down racial barriers in our schools," said SPFE President Nick Faber in a news release the morning his members walked out.

Negotiations began in May 2019 between SPFE and the district. The union offered 31 proposals and filed for mediation that November because the district never offered counters to many of those proposals. They had 12 mediation sessions before the strike took place.

The union's top priorities were:

- More mental health supports in schools, including more social workers, counselors, psychologists, school nurses and behavior intervention specialists.
- More multilingual staff to help our students and families who need interpreters.
- Additional educators working with students with special needs and appropriate assignments for educators so they can give students more one-on-one attention.
- Expanding restorative practices to build community and a positive climate in schools.

"Educators all over Minnesota share the same frustrations as our colleagues in St. Paul. We don't have enough resources to do our jobs as we know they need to be done—not for students with special needs, not for students living with trauma, not for students learning English and not for students who need one-on-one attention," said Denise Specht, president of Education Minnesota, in a news release on March 10. "Minnesota educators believe in working in union to improve the lives of our students and to sustain our families.

Today, the members of SPFE are showing we mean it. They're walking tall for what's right."

The strike ended after three days and a negotiations session that went into the early morning hours of March 13.

"We're proud of our members during this strike," said Faber. "The resolve they showed is inspiring to me as a teacher and union leader."

As of press time, the union was not releasing the specifics of their tentative agreement publicly, because they were sharing it at worksites with their members ahead of the ratification vote.

"We have great TAs that we'll be putting to our members," Faber said.

The union did say that the agreement includes:

- More social workers, nurses, intervention specialists, psychologists and multilingual staff.
- Expanding restorative practices to build positive school climates and help end the school-to-prison pipeline.
- More manageable workloads to give students with special needs more one-on-one attention.
- Wage increases.
- Building-based substitute teachers for schools that chronically have a difficult time finding substitutes.
- Prep time for educational assistants who are interpreters
- An agreement to call for a moratorium on new charter schools.

SPFE includes both licensed educators and nonlicensed school personnel.

As they walked out on March 10, 87 percent or 3,094 of SPFE's members were on the picket lines and about 3,000 educators, students, parents and community members participated in a march from a school through the West Seventh Street business district to district headquarters.

That march also included speakers such as



Saint Paul Federation of Educators members marched at different high-profile locations throughout the city during the three-day strike.

Faber, Specht, American Federation of Teachers President Randi Weingarten and National Education Association President Lily Eskelsen García.

"I know all of you would rather be in school with your kids," said Weingarten. "But we are on the streets, as we have been coast-to-coast, from West Virginia to Seattle. We've been on the streets for the last two years because educators want what children need."

The strike lines took place at school sites, but also stretched to local neighborhoods and street corners and even the overpasses crossing I-94 and I-35E.

At Central High School, German teacher Mary-Fred Bausman-Watkins said her large school

desperately needs the additional mental health supports that the union was fighting for.

"We have two social workers – one that is dedicated to special ed students and one for the 1,600 general ed students," she said. "It's just not equitable. They are always swamped and can't meet all the students' needs."

At J.J. Hill Montessori, Deidra Carlson said the school does not have a full-time nurse, or adequate levels of other mental health and student support staff.

"We are the experts," she said. "And no one is listening to us."

Day two, March 11, featured those same numbers of educators on the strike lines, and a march through downtown St. Paul – past city hall and businesses.

St. Paul City Councilors Nelsie Yang and Mitra Jalali spoke in support of the educators and their demands, as did Minnesota State Auditor and former teacher and union leader Julie Blaha.

On the strike line at Harding High School, Tom Stinson, the school nurse, also serves on the union's bargaining team.

"(District leaders) say everything is fine," he said. "But if I can't stand up for myself, how can we best support students?"

Stinson was joined on the line at Harding by Beth Kemis, the school psychologist.

"My national association recommends a 1-to-500 ratio," she said. "I have 2,500 students I serve. And they have me doing mostly special education assessments. We could be doing more to help students, but we don't have time."

Harding's strike line also included Hmong dual language teachers Youa Lee and Chivouay Lo.

"All of the things our union is bringing to the table, we see in our classrooms," said Lo. "Our Hmong dual language students need to have access to someone who can understand their culture and what their parents need, too."

"We also need that education assistant support," said Lee. "We don't have a Hmong EA at Harding."

At Maxfield Elementary, Fallon Henderson said she is lucky to be the school's restorative practices coordinator, because a lot of schools don't have one.



Saint Paul Federation of Educators members and allies marched down West Seventh Street to district headquarters after their first day on the strike lines, March 10.

"We are a small school, but we are mighty," she said. "But we have been hit by a lot of tragedies in our school and community. We're trying to build healing and we know that's going to take a lot of staff support."

Henderson said her school has seen the difference having a restorative practices program makes for both students and staff.

"Students and staff can come and ask me questions," she said. "Just having that time to set aside and talk through things is key. Students come and say, 'I want to talk.'"

Murray Middle School teachers also talked about the lack of supply budgets to give their students an equitable and adequate education in classes like art and science.

"I see half of the school," said Lolly Haas, an art teacher. "I have a zero-dollar budget for supplies. Everything I get is from fundraising and parent support."

Haas also addressed her high class size as a barrier to giving students the proper mental health support.

"We hear we need to do more," she said. "But when you have 36 students in a class, how can you pull a student aside and have a meaningful conversation?"

Murray science teacher Nick Altringer also said that years and years of shortages in his supply budget have impacted his teaching.

"We need access to materials to allow for good inquiry," he said. "We also need more staff support to make school a safe place so they can focus and learn science."

Day three, March 12, brought educators out onto the lines, but with umbrellas and ponchos

as rain fell for most of the day, and to a march from Central High School to University Avenue.

Leaders from the United Teachers Los Angeles and Chicago Teachers Union spoke with messages of solidarity from their members who have been out on strike in the last few years, too.

At St. Anthony Park Elementary, fifth grade teacher Tari Hella-Yelk said that students at their school speak more than a dozen home languages.

"We need proper interpreters," she said. "We want family involvement and one of the best ways to do that is to communicate effectively and properly."

Jennifer Christianson, a first grade teacher at Adams Spanish Immersion, said that the union's proposal for smaller class sizes specifically for immersion programs was very important to them.

"I have 29 first graders and four IEPs, so it would be great to get the class sizes down a little smaller in order to give them the best experience learning a second language," she said. "We also need professional development that is specific to immersion programs."

While the union knows that it didn't get everything members wanted in this contract, and settled when it did partially because of the COVID-19 response needed from the district, Faber said he knows his members are not putting their energy away.

"We're ready to keep fighting," he said. "Our members are organized and going to continue to put the students' needs first. You saw the educators out there and how much they care and how much they are willing to sacrifice."

ESP MEMBERS PLAY CENTRAL ROLE IN SAINT PAUL STRIKE

The Saint Paul Federation of Educators strike March 10-12 was the first strike in Education Minnesota history that included education support professionals and nonlicensed staff.

"Our ESPs, we matter and we will not be on the back burner anymore," said Sylvia Perez, a community and parent support staff at Crossroads Elementary and the nonlicensed director at SPFE. "We deserve everything we are fighting for."

The union's bargaining team included Perez and many other ESP members.

Many of the union's proposals centered on better supporting multilingual staff, many of whom are ESPs, as well as additional educators working with students with special needs and appropriate assignments for educators so they can give students more one-on-one attention and wage increases.

Most Saint Paul ESPs work more than one job to sustain a living.

"I only work two jobs, but I worry about my colleagues who work four," said Yasmin Muridi, a member of the bargaining team and Education Minnesota's ESP of the Year, at Education Minnesota's Unity Summit on Feb. 1. "One job should be enough."

On the strike line at Central High School was Fatuma Aden, a Somali education assistant who just started with the district three weeks before. She is the first Somali EA at Central in three years, a school with a large Somali student population.

Aden splits her time between Central and Humboldt High School.

"I go to classes with kids and get to know them, but then I have to move to Humboldt for two days," she said. "I have parents calling me and I talk them through what is happening with their students. I have students telling me, 'I wish you could be here every day.'"

Harding High School EA Maetzin Saenz said that ESPs are being asked to do more and more,



Saint Paul Federation of Educators leader Yasmin Muridi takes part in the March 11 rally in downtown St. Paul.

without the proper supports and training.

"It's not fair to students," she said. "We just don't have enough. Students have developing brains. How can we say mental health isn't an education issue?"

Another Harding EA, Hsakushee Zan, said she works with all 140 Karen students in the building, as well as provide the connection between home and school.

"We want parents to feel welcome in the schools, too," she said. "But if they call with a question, I have to step out of the classroom where I am working with a student."

St. Anthony Park Elementary EAs were on the line with teachers to ask for additional staffing.

"We see a lot of understaffing in our programs and direct one-to-one ratios aren't being met," said Jon Thao, an EA and group lead for Discovery Club, the before- and after-school program.

"We're trying our best to spread ourselves and right now we're spreading ourselves too thin."

The district did agree to increased staffing for ESP positions, as well as prep time for educational assistants who are interpreters.



The Saint Paul Federation of Educators have shown us that mass collective action is possible, and you can even have a little fun doing it.

From creative signs to dancing on the strike line to chants and songs to standing on overpasses above freeways while cars honked below, the educators of St. Paul found ways to keep their spirits up while they were in the hard fight for what their students need.

Photos courtesy of SPFE members Mark Westpfahl and Ellen Perrault.



EDUCATION MINNESOTA CANDIDATES' ELECTION STATEMENTS

At the 2020 Representative Convention, delegates will elect the leaders for Education Minnesota. Positions to be filled are: NEA Director, At Large Zone (one position per zone), Higher Ed/ Statewide Affiliate, Governing Board ESP At Large (two positions).

All candidates had the opportunity to submit a statement and/or photograph. These statements and photos appear here in the Minnesota Educator and on the Education Minnesota website. Members may view the statements online by going to www.educationminnesota.org, signing in and then clicking on the Elections tab.

CANDIDATES FOR NEA DIRECTOR



Marty Scofield

Marty Scofield

State Residential Schools Education Association

Union friends, I would be honored to be your voice as NEA Director. If elected, I will advocate for full funding to make our schools safer for both students and staff. Also, I will advocate for a renewed focus on educating our students, not Incarcerating them. In solidarity, I'm Marty Scofield.



Joey Mathews

Joey Mathews

Dakota County United Educators

Together, we can face the challenges in our profession and participate in national education policy. My classroom experiences and union involvement at the local, state and national level will help me advocate for, and accomplish member driven goals. I ask for your vote, in order to serve you.

CANDIDATES FOR GOVERNING BOARD AT LARGE ZONES 1-8

No photo

Maureen Morrow: Zone 1 (elected)*Deer River Education Association*

Joan Lancour

Joan Lancour: Zone 2 (elected)*Education Minnesota Duluth Clerical Local 692-A*

Student success is important to me! I've worked in various ESP positions and currently serve students as an administrative assistant. I understand the importance of all members contributing to student success. I pledge to work together so our voices can be heard in support of schools and students.

No photo

Ryan Fiereck: Zone 3 (elected)*Education Minnesota St. Francis, Local 1977*

No photo

Ann Hersman: Zone 4*Minnetonka Teachers Association*

Tammy Knapper

Tammy Knapper: Zone 4*Education Minnesota - Willmar*

I am Tammy Knapper, president and lead negotiator of Education MN Willmar. I put others needs before my own, volunteer my time and enjoy being a strong voice and advocate for teachers in rural MN. I encourage new teachers to be active and leaders in their union and do it all with a positive, fun attitude.

No photo

Michael Groothuis: Zone 4*Montevideo Education Association*

Joe Cerar

Joe Cerar: Zone 5*Education Minnesota Plainview-Elgin-Millville*

Experience: 22 yrs leadership at all levels Priorities: social justice/racial equity; advocate for Greater MN & small rural locals; continue leadership in the labor movement; lead the fight for full funding & rebuild the antiquated, inadequate, & disparate funding formula
Pledge: represent ALL members

CANDIDATES FOR GOVERNING BOARD AT LARGE ZONES 1-8

No photo

Monica Maloney: Zone 5*Triton Education Association*

I have been a rural educator in Southeast MN for 17 years, in elementary and secondary settings. I have served as our local secretary, VP, a building rep., and a negotiator. I serve on our IO's board and provide legislative updates to the board and attended national conventions for both NEA and AFT.

No photo

Stephen Cade: Zone 5*Northfield Education Association*

No photo

Kate Schmidt: Zone 6*Dakota County United Educators*

No photo

Dale Anderson: Zone 7*Shakopee Education Association*

My desire is to serve members by fostering clear communication between members and EdMN's leadership. Public education is the foundation of our democracy, and my goal is to work with other leaders to protect it and improve it. Every teacher deserves respect and a professional working environment.

Jana Hedlund: Zone 7*North St. Paul-Maplewood-Oakdale Education Association*

Valerie Holthus

Valerie Holthus: Zone 8*Anoka Hennepin Education Minnesota*

We must break down barriers at the Capitol and grow strong union support to secure our future. We must work for our teachers to negotiate strong contracts, stable health care and competitive wages. As President of AHM, I have formed relationships with legislators to further these efforts.

No photo

Ken Shain: Zone 8

*Minneapolis Federation of Teachers/Paraprofessionals
and School Related Personnel, Local 59*

CANDIDATES FOR GOVERNING BOARD AT LARGE ESP



Michelle Dennard

Michelle Dennard*Education Minnesota-OSSEO Education Support Professionals*

I am extremely honored to serve on the Governing Board. I will continue to work hard for all ESP's, Educators, Students, and Communities as we break down barriers for public education, racial, and mental disparities. I would love your Vote!



Yasmin Muridi

Yasmin Muridi*St. Paul Federation of Educators, Local 28*

Being a Muslim woman, it is common for me to feel different in my surroundings. I truly believe my differences are what set me apart for the rest and make me a stronger advocate for all educators. I see through the lens of those who need advocacy.

CANDIDATES FOR GOVERNING BOARD HIGHER EDUCATION/STATEWIDE AFFILIATE



Elizabethada Wright

Elizabethada (Liz) Wright*University Education Association*

I want to help Higher Ed and K-12 EDMN members recognize our commonalities and how we can work to support each other. As a member of the Dues Committee, I saw how much all educators have in common. I am dedicated to seeing how we can work together to make our institutions work for all our students.

*No photo***Bety Rios-Christensen***State Residential Schools Education Association*

I am seeking re-election for Higher Education/Statewide affiliate at-large. It is with great passion that I will continue advocating for Public Education. United- the fight continues- for a fair and just education system; for better salaries, benefits; for equity and diversity.



CALLING ALL STUDENT ARTISTS!

As educators in Minnesota are working on digital learning plans, Education Minnesota wants to invite you to join our student artwork contest! All educators can ask students of any grade level to create a piece of art that answers the question, "What was your favorite part of this school year?" or "What was your favorite thing you learned this year?"

Educators should collect the student art, scan it as a high-resolution copy and email it to educator@edmn.org by May 8. Please include your name, the student's first name, age, school and district.

Submissions will be featured in the June/July issue of the Minnesota Educator, as well as on our social media channels. One piece of art will be chosen for the cover of the magazine!

As of press time, Minnesota schools were closing to students so educators could plan for distance learning in case a longer building closure is needed, in response to COVID-19.

Education Minnesota is working to support its members, as well as Minnesota students during this time.

For resources on planning distance learning, professional development opportunities for educators, and updates on things happening at the Legislature relating to COVID-19 closures and its effect on working educators, go to www.educationminnesota.org/resources/in-the-classroom/coronavirus.

This site will also include any updated guidance from the Minnesota Department of Education on distance learning schedules and implementation, assessments, the delivery of nutrition, mental health and special education services and more.

Please contact your local president or field staff if you have any questions about your contract and how this situation affects your working conditions, pay or leaves.

UNITY SUMMIT KICKS OFF CAMPAIGN FOR FULL FUNDING

More than 500 Education Minnesota members attended the Unity Summit, Jan. 31-Feb. 2. The event served as a political conference and kickoff to the union's full funding campaign which will focus on the election in November and 2021 legislative session.

"To deliver the schools our students deserve, and to raise the revenue we need to do it, our union has created a plan to build our strength and join with allies," Education Minnesota President Denise Specht said.

The campaign is driven by the idea that through our democracy, and especially our union, we have the collective power to vote together for public education in 2020 and win full funding for our schools in 2021.

The 2020-21 Minnesota plan:

1. Get out 100 percent of the educator vote for public education on Nov. 3, 2020.
2. Collectively engage at least 33,000 parents and community voters in the election and beyond.
3. Unite our co-workers and communities in a statewide movement for full funding of public education in the spring of 2021.

Moving forward, local unions and chapters will be organizing unity teams in each of their worksites. Those teams will engage other educators and their

community around issues related to electing a pro-public education majority in the Minnesota Senate and holding that majority in the Minnesota House.

After the election, the plan is to push lawmakers to pass a budget that fully funds public education in 2021. This will include a campaign to raise the revenue from wealthy Minnesotans and corporations.

"This won't be easy. When educators talk about fully funding public education, we're talking about far more than \$4.3 billion," said Specht. "We need more mental professionals, pay raises for ESPs, money to stabilize the teacher workforce, more aid for higher education and many other things."

The summit also included a public meeting with speakers from the West Virginia Education Association and Oakland Education Association, two unions who have taken collective action in support of schools and students as part of the #RedForEd movement.

The public meeting also included members of Education Minnesota sharing why they are in the fight for fully funding public education. Gov. Tim Walz and Minnesota House Speaker Melissa Hortman attended and were asked for a commitment to support us as we ask lawmakers to fund what schools and students need.

Both lawmakers did make a commitment to raising revenue and fully funding education.

Educators should look for actions in their local unions and worksites this spring, depending on the coronavirus response.

This campaign will be led by members, both in the locals and at the state level.

A unity table is being convened with members from around the state, who will be making decisions on work and support provided for the members implementing the campaign plan.

More information on this table and how they will be communicating with members will be shared in future issues of the Minnesota Educator.

Additional trainings for members to become worksite unity team members will be taking place this spring and summer. As of press time, those dates and locations are on hold due to the coronavirus, but information will be sent out to members as soon as possible.

Go to edmnvotes.org for information about the campaign, including social media graphics, information for worksite unity team members and resources on why education funding, education support professionals issues, school safety and mental health, teacher preparation and more are the cornerstones of our campaign.

WHY ARE WE FIGHTING FOR FULLY FUNDING PUBLIC EDUCATION?

During the Unity Summit public meeting on Feb. 1, Education Minnesota members shared why they are going to be a part of our campaign.

"Since 2013, our district asked five times – yes, five times – for voters to approve ballot measures to build a new school and add on to the high school. Each time, voters rejected them. Apparently the sixth time was a charm. Last November, voters finally approved a \$34 million construction package. It's insane that the quality of my students' education depends on how well my students and I can door knock and beg my neighbors to raise their property taxes."

– Jodi Hansen, Education Minnesota-Worthington

"Fully funding schools across the state would allow schools to provide enough counselors, social workers, and other human resources to support every student. We can begin to give the professional development that so many educators across the state are craving. I have done trainings on trauma across the country and all across the state, from Sebeka to Waseca. The need is there. The need is real. This money will make a difference."

– Jim Parry, Stewartville United Educators

"In higher ed, we have served to almost entirely individualize the burden of underfunding – putting it solely on the backs of students through increased tuition and student debt. We have shifted higher education from a public good to almost exclusively a private one."

– Mark Grant, Minnesota State College Faculty

"Like many districts, our staff does not mirror our student body, which becomes more diverse every year. We receive few applicants for openings, which would certainly change if we were able to offer better salary and benefits. Better funding also means more training and support, both of which will help us retain the teachers and support staff we do hire."

– Mindy Christianson, Fergus Falls Education Association

"Fully funding our schools allows for schools to provide comprehensive training in anti-racist and culturally responsive teaching. It allows for schools to purchase curriculum and materials that are most impactful for their student body. Fully funded schools have enough staff and teachers to provide class sizes that allow the teacher to provide enough support. Fully funded schools can be innovative in providing academic experiences."

– Teresa Stadem, Education Richfield

"We all care about the students and families we work with. But when we have to work many jobs, I worry about my colleagues. I only work two jobs but some of my colleagues work four. ESPs deserve a living wage. One job is enough!"

– Yasmin Muridi, Saint Paul Federation of Educators



ROCHESTER'S QUETONE BRINGS LIFE EXPERIENCES INTO CLASSROOM, UNION ADVOCACY

Tucker Quetone didn't think he wanted to be a teacher. His parents were both teachers and he knew the limitations a career in education could bring, especially financially.

"I tried a few different majors and realized that I wanted to work with youth, and teaching was the best avenue," he said.

After teaching in a few different states, as well as Palestine, Quetone arrived in Minnesota in 1992.

Quetone didn't always think he would become a union leader, either. But after the district denied his application for a sabbatical and his union representative came with him to talk with administration.

"I saw what having a person represent me means," he said.

From there, Quetone served as a building representative, vice president and then president of the Rochester Education Association. He is also the chair of the American Indian/Alaska Native Caucus of the National Education Association.

His teaching and union leadership are both reasons why Quetone was Minnesota's 2020 nominee for the National Education Association's Excellence in Education award. Quetone was recently celebrated at a gala in Washington, D.C.

Quetone is an English teacher at Rochester's Alternative Learning Center, a school he chose after leaving his union president position.

"I chose to come to the ALC because I wanted to work in a full-service community school," he said. "There's so much support for our students. It's all integrated here."

The school has a medical clinic that is staffed by the Mayo Clinic, where students and staff can access care without having to leave class for a long period of time. The school also has a laundry facility, a recovery program and a community garden.

"We see a lot of kids come in who are frustrated and hopeless about being successful in school," Quetone said. "They turn around here and find some value in education that they can achieve and have a bright future."

The school has a waiting list of 100 students, Quetone said. They not only serve Rochester Public Schools students, but also have students from surrounding districts looking to attend.

Quetone has brought an ethnic voices class into the school, which focuses on the movements and struggles of minority groups.

"I have piloted the ethnic studies classes here the last three years," he said. "Now we are launching it districtwide in the fall."

Quetone has also advocated for the district to change Columbus Day to Indigenous People's Day, which then sparked a revision of the elementary Thanksgiving traditions.

"People are open to understanding and changing," Quetone said. "A lot of times they are unaware or don't know how to go about it. If you want to see something change, bring



Tucker Quetone (second from left) was honored as Minnesota's 2020 nominee for the National Education Association's Excellence in Education award at a gala in February. Pictured with Quetone is (from left) NEA Foundation President and CEO Sara Sneed, California Casualty President and CEO Joseph Volponi and NEA President Lily Eskelsen García.



Tucker Quetone, an English teacher at the Rochester Area Learning Center, has a conversation with his students about American Indian history and movements as part of the ethnic voices class he helped create. Quetone is Minnesota's 2020 nominee for the National Education Association's Excellence in Education award.

up the topic and make people aware."

Quetone said part of that is seeking out groups to help make change as well, which he has found in the NEA caucus.

"I wasn't aware of the NEA caucus of American Indian/Alaska Native until I went to the Representative Assembly," he said. "The RA is where we have our caucus meeting where we make our connections and network. I always want to spread the word that these groups are out there."

Quetone is also a part of Education Minnesota's American Indian Education Professionals group.

"I've been able to see how important it is to have our voice in the room and at the table," he said. "Through these roles, I'm able to speak for American Indian teachers and students at the state and national level and make our concerns heard."

Quetone serves as president of the Education Minnesota Foundation for Excellence in Teaching and Learning.

"We have made a lot of great changes in the last

few years – simplifying the application process, expanded grant programs," he said. "Giving money to teachers is always a good thing."

Quetone said he continues to try and spread the word that the foundation is available for all Education Minnesota members.

"I've been able to do some site visits and phone calls with people who have gotten grants," he said. "Some amazing things have happened with even just a little bit of seed money. To enable teachers to try new experiences or have new equipment in their room has been very rewarding to see."

Quetone will continue to fight for his students and the profession, especially for students and educators of color.

"When I was local president, we were able to get a NEA grant to redevelop our teacher mentorship program," he said. "I passed that off to our current president and it's going much better. The district has put some money into it. Now we just got a grant to work with teachers of color and do a lot of professional development around equity."

COLLEGE FACULTY FOCUS ON WORKSITE CONVERSATIONS

The Minnesota State College Faculty is looking to build the union organizing skills of its members, as well as solidarity at its chapters, through a new member assessment project.

"These skills are not something that people are born with," said MSCF President Matt Williams.

"There's something about a one-on-one conversation in an organizing setting that is unique, it has a purpose. We spend, as educators, a lot of time having conversations, but this is a special and unique conversation. We want to provide the training and education so our members have those skills."

MSCF has started with six of its chapters, who are putting together teams to start this work. The teams all took part in a training at Education Minnesota's St. Paul office in January, and have been beginning to implement their plans. The project is being funded by an Education Minnesota Local Time Enhancement Grant.

The goal is to have conversations with 90 percent of their members by the end of the academic year.

"We are having monthly check-in calls," said MSCF Secretary Gretchen Long. "We talk about how they are going to accomplish their goals and what successes or problems they might be having."

If all chapters meet their conversations goal, it would mean 650 conversations took place.

"They are finding, for the most part, that the

conversations have gone well," Long said.

"Something that is unique to higher ed is that they don't necessarily understand the other programs on the campus. First you have to understand what someone does all day, then you can start to appreciate that which builds the greater solidarity."

The faculty who are participating in the program are excited about the member engagement potential of this project.

"I am hopeful we can energize or reenergize our membership," said Liz McLemore, from Minneapolis Community and Technical College. "We want to refocus on the positives our union can celebrate and address any problems it needs to address."

At Fond du Lac Tribal and Community College, the faculty is looking to become more of a collective through their union.

"We would like to have a higher density of membership and activate more members," said Carl Sack. "We want to look at concerns for our students and with our system, and show that being in a union is doing good for the collective."

For faculty at St. Cloud Technical and Community College, they have a good system of union leaders in place and have a team of 12 ready to take on this project.

"We're all involved," said Vicky Kapitzke. "But we want to know what the two or three issues are that we all want to fight for, and is there something we can do about it?"

While this initial project is a pilot, MSCF leadership hopes this is the start of a union-wide movement.

"Our long-term goals recognize that we're in a moment of history that the status quo and small changes aren't working for our students, our campuses, our profession," said Williams. "We have to increase our capacity to make change happen. This program is beginning a much longer journey we will go on. Our most powerful tool of change is that we can work together and that we share a common interest. This is just the very beginning of a lot of exciting stuff."



A team from St. Cloud Technical and Community College works on their member engagement plan during a training in January. The team is aiming to have conversations with 90 percent of its chapter's members this academic year through a new MSCF project.

Professional development

UNION LEADERSHIP TRAINING

Education Minnesota's Emerging Leaders Program provides opportunities for members to learn skills to help them be the union leaders of tomorrow.

The 2020 Emerging Leaders Program will take place June 16-18 at the College of St. Benedict in St. Joseph, Minn. Registration is free, but space is limited. Go to www.educationminnesota.org/advocacy/Union-U/emerging-leaders-program for more information or to register.

MATH EDUCATORS' SYMPOSIUM, CONFERENCE

The Minnesota Council of Teachers of Mathematics is hosting its spring conference, as well as a pre-conference symposium in Duluth. The symposium will take place April 23, and has participants explore the five main task structures that support students in learning mathematics in groups. The conference will take place April 24-25 and features workshops, exhibits and keynote speakers. To learn more about the symposium or conference, including how to register, go to www.mctm.org/springconf.php and www.mctm.org/symposium.php.

HAMLIN SUMMER SCIENCE TEACHER INSTITUTES

Hamline University is offering two free summer institutes for teachers of science. The three-day WaterWorks Institute allows teachers to enrich their water-related curricula by learning from experts how safe drinking water is produced while experiencing a host of water resources and activities for the classroom. The Rivers Institute is designed to promote environmental and ecological concepts in the science classroom. For detailed information and online applications, please visit www.hamline.edu/education/cgee/teacher-institute.html.

TWO PRAIRIE WETLANDS WORKSHOP OPPORTUNITIES

The Prairie Wetlands Learning Center has a spring and summer workshop for educators looking to bring their classrooms into the outdoors. The Compass to Nature Workshop, April 18, and the Teaching in the Outdoor Classroom workshop, June 22-25, will have educators explore ways to use the outdoors as a classroom with integrated curriculum, discover new ways to motivate students, apply outdoor classroom methods and gain knowledge

in the prairie pothole ecosystem. For more information or to register for either workshop, go to www.friendsofprairiewetlands.com.

CLIMATE CHANGE SUMMER INSTITUTE

Climate Generation will host its Summer Institute for Climate Change Education, July 22-24, at Hamline University. This year, the institute will be highlighting resources for teaching climate change in science, English and social studies classrooms. Participants will receive 20 hours of continuing education and two graduate credits. Registration is \$200, but scholarships are available. For more information on the institute and registration, go to www.climategen.org/our-core-programs/climate-change-education/professional-development/summer-institute.

NATIONAL TEACHER LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE

The National Network of State Teachers of the Year is hosting its teacher leadership conference in Minneapolis, July 8-10. The conference is open to all educators and school leaders. The conference will feature many of Minnesota's Teachers of the Year and focuses on three tracks of equity, being a teacher leader and learner-centered instruction practices. There are two pre-conference sessions on racial literacy and social justice curriculum writing, and building youth leadership skills. Registration for the pre-conference sessions is \$99, and the full conference is \$350. For more information on the conference and how to register, go to www.nnstoy.org/national-conference-2020.

ONLINE LEARNING RESOURCES

As of press time, Minnesota educators are preparing for how to best ensure the health and safety of their students, themselves and their communities in wake of the coronavirus.

Education Minnesota has compiled a resources page of online professional development for educators, as well as remote learning resources for educators, students and parents.

To see all of the resources, go to www.educationminnesota.org/resources/in-the-classroom/Coronavirus/Educator-resources.

Summer Seminar registration opens May 1

Save the date for Summer Seminar, Education Minnesota's flagship professional development retreat, this Aug. 3-5.

Education Minnesota is excited to announce that during this year's Summer Seminar, we've expanded our course offerings. That's right – more professional development. More ideas to build a powerful local union. And based on your feedback, we're offering even more member-led courses. This is an opportunity to gain professional development created by educators, for educators.

Summer Seminar takes place during the first week of August each year at the College of St. Benedict in St. Joseph, Minn. All Education Minnesota members are invited to attend for three days of personal and professional development, an opportunity to connect with other educators from across the state and have fun!

The seminar will have a multitude of courses that fall into these main strands:

- Bargaining and negotiations
- Know your rights! Legal rights and responsibilities for educators and union leaders
- Leading and growing your union
- Minnesota Educator Academy: professional practice
- Personal finance and wellness
- Policy and politics
- Voluntary unionism: Thriving after the *Janus* decision

Registration opens online May 1 at www.educationminnesota.org. The deadline to register is July 17.

Local union presidents will receive more information about Summer Seminar when registration opens. Please contact your field office or Sam Jasenosky at sam.jasenosky@edmn.org for more information.

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



Chelsey Pederson, Menasha

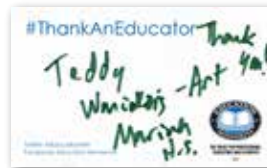
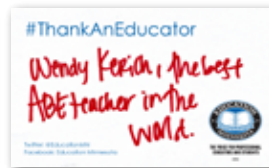
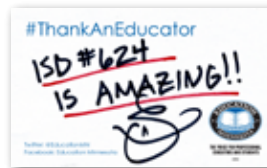
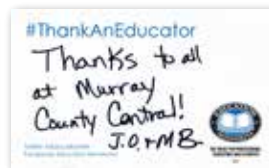
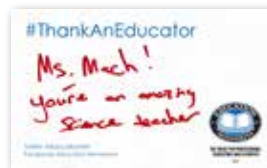


Julianne Montgomery, Retired

#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

THE BENEFITS OF WORKING WITH AN EFS ADVISOR

Education Minnesota ESI Sponsored Financial Partner

DEDICATED TO MINNESOTA'S EDUCATORS: YOUR FULL-SERVICE INVESTMENT MANAGEMENT FIRM

Since 1989, EFS Advisors has serviced over 20,000 members. Their team of over 40 advisors is member driven. True pension and 403(b) experts, their focus is on helping you understand your benefits and options, while assisting you as you work toward your financial and retirement planning goals.

EXPERT ADVICE: SAVE TIME

There is a lot of work involved in tracking your investments, monitoring the markets and watching out for possible risk. Partnering with a professional at EFS Advisors allows an expert to focus on what they do best, so you can attend to other important aspects of your life.

*Increased growth when working with a financial advisor



Not only do financial professionals help people **increase their wealth**, but the longer people receive advice, **the more their investments grow**.

*Correlation does not imply causation; working with a financial advisor should NOT be construed as a guarantee of future financial success. Investing involves risk of loss and working with a financial advisor does not assure you a profit or avoidance of loss.

2 Center for Interuniversity Research and Analysis Organization, 2016.

PROFESSIONAL REVIEW OF GOALS AND INVESTMENTS: CLARITY ABOUT YOUR FINANCIAL JOURNEY

By law, registered investment advisors are held to a fiduciary standard of care, meaning they must ensure each recommendation they make is based on your best interest.

All advisors at EFS Advisors are fiduciaries and will spend time understanding your needs, aspirations and will outline a plan to help you achieve those goals.

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We continue to amass various assets throughout our life, but without proper asset allocation, we may not be maximizing potential investment returns or may be over-exposed to losses in a down market. The financial advisors at EFS Advisors monitor asset allocations regularly, working toward an appropriate balance of your investments.

To take advantage of the opportunity to start planning for your tomorrow, contact one of EFS Advisors' financial professionals today at **763-689-9023**, educatorsfinancial@efsadvisors.com, or visit us online at www.efsadvisors.com.



Navigating Your Financial Future

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esi.educationminnesota.org esi@edmn.org



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THE VOICE FOR PROFESSIONAL
EDUCATORS AND STUDENTS

Education Minnesota
41 Sherburne Ave.
St. Paul, MN 55103

Invitations to fill out the 2020 Census have started hitting mailboxes!

For the first time, Minnesotans can fill out their census forms:

- ▶ *Online: <http://my2020census.gov>*
- ▶ *By phone*
- ▶ *In writing*

The importance of the U.S. census to the well-being of children and the strength of their public schools cannot be overstated.

Using census data, the federal government allocates tens of billions of dollars in education funds to states and localities annually using formulas that factor in population and poverty levels. An accurate census count is the critical first step to helping educators address the needs of every child who walks through their doors.

The National Education Association and American Federation of Teachers have resources for educators about the importance of the census to use in their classrooms and with parents.

Go to www.neatoday.org/2019/11/13/2020census
and www.aft.org/census2020.