

HOW TO USE THE “OUR VALUES, OUR STUDENTS, OUR SCHOOLS” PROCLAMATION

What is it?

The “Our Values, Our Students, Our Schools” proclamation can serve as a public notice directed at the governor and state and local officials that outlines student needs and declares to all decision makers that we are ready to begin the collective bargaining process. It is designed to give your local space to note your needs and demands at the table and to the Legislature. The goal is for all locals to kick off the bargaining process the same day, March 13.

What goes into the proclamation?

- A statement of your local’s bargaining objectives through the lens of student needs.
- A notice to the governor, local legislators and school board members that you expect and your students deserve visionary funding to help prepare them for successful lives.
- A list of what your students and schools need.
- A statement of your local’s values, i.e. the “why” of your bargaining demands.

What kind of language can we use in our “needs” and “values” statements:

- Present solutions, talk about the future and evoke aspirations. Don’t lead with, or belabor, problems.
- Speak to human needs for our students and their families, not simply what they “produce,” or what the economy desires.
- Describe objectives in more than just financial terms like wages and benefits.
- Seize the moral high ground by talking about what’s right.
- Stay positive and student-focused. The goal is always to **prepare students for successful lives.**

What do we do with the proclamation?

- Post the document on your social media channels for easy access by members.
- Distribute it to members, preferably at membership meetings or in other settings where they can ask questions. It is not very useful to simply pass it out without further explanation.
- Use the document as the basis for communications with parents, the public and the media.

Why should we use this document?

We often bargain contracts in isolation, which diminishes our power. Treating bargaining as primarily a way to solve problems at the local level ignores the common issues that all educators are facing and lets decision makers off the hook. We want to clearly point out, both in the bargaining and legislative context, that decision makers at the state level are responsible for providing resources for what students need and that school districts are responsible for working with us to direct those funds locally.

More resources on Unity Day are available at: www.educationminnesota.org/unityday.



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