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President’s report

Denise Specht, president

Dear delegates,

There is too much crying in the school parking lot.

Our union has shielded educators in Minnesota from the worst attacks on public education and we’ve won some important victories in the past year, but it has not been enough.

Our students, especially our students of color, desperately need us to provide the attention, supports and expert teaching they need to succeed in post-secondary education and beyond.

At the same time, I still hear too many stories of working conditions that have reduced educators to tears of frustration because they can’t overcome the obstacles put in their way.

Minnesota educators continue to operate in a system of public education from preschool to public college that is equal to any in the United States, but we do it at a cost to our health and financial security that cannot continue.

The theme of the Education Minnesota Representative Convention this year is Raising Our Voice. It means acting together to improve the system so it works for everyone, everywhere.

There is no time to waste.

The Professional Educator Licensing and Standards Board reports there are 70,000 people in Minnesota with valid teaching licenses who have chosen not to teach. That’s more than the 64,000 teachers working inside E-12 schools.

State figures show that of the 7,000 teachers who left the profession in 2016-17, nearly a quarter left for personal reasons. The state’s research doesn’t specify why those educators decided to leave education before retirement, but our own union surveys give a clue.

More than 1,700 educators have filled out a Community Needs Assessment. Seventy percent said they had seriously considered leaving the profession. The most common reasons they listed were burnout, a lack of respect and administrators putting too much on their plate.

The state data doesn’t capture the experiences of our education support professionals, but a recent debate at the Legislature did. When lawmakers discussed the effects of missing more than a week of school days due to weather, the conversation focused on ESPs.

Many ESPs said they took third or fourth jobs to makes ends meet. Some had negative paychecks in January after their employers deducted the cost of their health insurance. That’s right. Some of our colleagues worked all their hours, with the same students teachers see every day, and owed money back to their district.
The root cause of the personnel problems in schools is money. Years of chronic underfunding by the state has resulted in the state investing 18 percent less now per pupil than in 2003, after adjusting for inflation. Local taxpayers have picked up the slack by approving local levies in many districts, but the amounts are uneven and often inadequate.

The federal government compounds the problem by refusing to pay its share of the cost of providing special education services to our neediest students. Decades ago, Congress promised to pay 40 percent of the cost of the federal special education mandates. Today, it pays 7 percent.

Minnesota school districts now move about $725 million a year from their general funds to pay for special education services. The cross subsidy, as it is called, affects every student and educator in our public schools. The decision by this Congress, and many before it, forces districts to make impossible funding choices that leave no one satisfied.

Earlier this year, Education Minnesota began to change the conversation about students, educators, money and quality. Our union called a news conference to present our own assessment of what fully funding public education would cost. To compensate all educators fairly, address crushing education debt, reduce class sizes, give every child access to pre-K, hire counselors, provide special education services that students deserve and recruit and retain more teachers of color, we calculated the cost at $3.7 billion to $4.3 billion in new spending for the biennium.

No one denied the size of the problem after our news conference. No one argued with our premise that the quality of education would improve if the state began to fully fund its public schools and colleges. The critics only said they wouldn’t raise the revenue to pay for it.

We say it’s time to restore some fairness to the tax code. The largest corporations and wealthiest Minnesotans received a tax windfall from Congress last year that is exploding the federal deficit and pressuring everything from Medicare to education to Social Security. We believe those folks can pay a little more in state taxes to invest in the next generation.

As of this writing, the leadership in the Minnesota Senate is blocking revenue increases. Educators have been paying the price for decisions like that for many years. The choices our leaders have made have created conditions in our worksites that harm educators in a deep, almost spiritual level.

I believe the term “moral injury” applies to the hurt educators feel when working in conditions that prevent them from delivering the kind of education our students need. It’s the harm idealistic, empathetic, justice-minded professionals feel in a system that is anything but.

The term comes from psychology. The journalist Diane Silver defines it as “a deep soul wound that pierces a person’s identity, sense of morality and relationship to society.” Therapists use it to describe the trauma experienced by some soldiers and medical professionals.
I sense moral injury in the story of a disappointed high school teacher who wants to help a struggling student after school, but can’t because the activity bus was canceled and the student has no other way home.

I hear it in the voice of the ESP who works a second job driving for Uber and had to choose between fixing his car and paying the electric bill. He fixed the car and lived in the dark for a while.

I feel it in the descriptions of the sheering pressure to meet a college’s goals for completion and retention by passing out the high grades the deans want, not the marks the students earned.

It’s the pain we share with the middle school language arts teacher who cannot assign the writing projects she knows her students need because she doesn’t have time to grade them and work her shifts at the restaurant over the weekend to pay her education debt.

And I see it in the face of the special education teacher who dreads the trauma she must cause students with profound special needs by forcing them to take grueling standardized tests each spring.

Don’t call it burnout when educators are beat down or walk away from a system that gives them more pain than satisfaction. Burnout blames the victim. Burnout says they weren’t tough enough. Burnout gets treated with lavender oil and lectures on mindfulness.

But most importantly, burnout misses the point. Call it moral injury. Moral injury doesn’t just happen. Someone does it to us. And it won’t stop until we make them stop.

To be sure, we’ve had more than our share of victories this year.

Labor lost the Janus case in the courtroom, but we won it in worksites all over Minnesota. Members rallied to protect educators’ freedom to join together and negotiate for our students’ learning conditions and for a fair return for our work. We entered 2019 with our membership as large and as connected as it has ever been.

In politics, Minnesota voters rejected campaigns to divide Minnesotans against each other with fear mongering. Instead, our state elected a former teacher from Mankato, Tim Walz, as its governor and a longtime advocate for children, Peggy Flanagan, as lieutenant governor.

Walz picked a former St. Paul teacher and union leader Mary Cathryn Ricker as his commissioner of education. The state House has a pro-education majority with former teachers on many key committees. Minnesotans elected as state auditor Julie Blaha, another former teacher and union leader.

Thousands of educators can feel proud of their part in these electoral victories, but our goal as a union has always been bigger than a single Election Day. We can’t say we won the November elections until there is a noticeable, measurable improvement in the learning and working conditions in our worksites. There must be fewer tears in the parking lot.
In the final weeks of the session, we must keep the pressure on the Legislature and hold our elected officials accountable for their campaign promises. This year is a contract year for many locals and we must go to the bargaining tables with straightforward proposals for what we really need—not for what’s easy.

As we finish the school year, wrap up the Legislature and ramp up our bargaining campaigns, I believe this is the time to raise our voice.

This is our time to work with pro-public education lawmakers to raise the revenue and invest the resources our students need to succeed.

As our union’s new ad campaign says, this is our time to insist the needs are real, the solutions aren’t cheap and that campaign promises must be kept.

It’s our time to say our state is strongest when we’re there for each other, no matter our differences.

It is time to stand against the greedy few who work to divide us against each other, so they don’t have to pay their fair share.

Time to talk about what our communities really need – on our roads, in the environment, at the doctor’s office and especially in our classrooms.

Time to use our power to restore justice to our economy and hope to all of our students, no matter where they call home or where they were born.

Time to fight back against the moral injury that has been done to us.

And time to let every opponent of great public education, and the people who deliver it, know that we’re not going away.

This is our time, educators.

Let’s go …

Together,

Denise Specht, president
Education Minnesota
Vice President’s report

Paul Mueller, vice president

Member delegates, thank you for taking the time to come to this 20th annual Education Minnesota Representative Convention to do the business of our union. Your involvement and engagement here enhances our collective power to deliver the resources our students need to be successful.

Over the past year, I’ve had the privilege to participate in a number of very successful outreach and recognition efforts within our union and in the community at large. The following projects have been a priority:

• AFL-CIO area labor council full affiliation project
• American Federation of Teachers (AFT) biannual convention – Pittsburgh, PA
• Operating levies – dedicated outreach and support
• Intermediate organization (IO) full affiliation project
• Minnesota AFL-CIO political conference – Education Minnesota member involvement
• Minnesota legislator contacts and networking – issues of special interest
• Officer outreach to locals for value of belonging one-to-one discussions
• National Council of Urban Education Association large local involvement project
• National Education Association (NEA) Leadership Summit – member involvement
• National Education Association Representative Assembly – Minneapolis
The following outline of job duties and activities serves as a partial summary of my responsibilities, as a full member or in an ex officio capacity as the vice president of Education Minnesota:

**Education Minnesota committees**

- Budget and Finance
- Constitution and Bylaws
- Credentials
- Crisis and Settlement Organizing Fund – chairperson
- Dues Task Force
- Economic Services Incorporated (ESI) Board
- Elections
- Executive
- Foundation Board of Trustees
- Governing Board
- Human Rights
- Intermediate Organization Leaders – chairperson
- Intermediate Organization – Full Affiliation Task Force
- Legislative Steering
- Legislative Action Committee
- National Education Association (NEA) Teacher of Excellence – selection chairperson
- Personnel
- Professional Advocacy
- Political Action Committee (PAC)
- Representative Convention Rules
- Statements of Principle
Member services work

• AFL-CIO Area Labor Council
• Crisis Fund Assessment facilitator
• Education Minnesota – Retired members supporter and member
• Education Minnesota – NEA director second alternate
• ESI Golf Tournament fundraiser participant
• Local negotiations rallies and special events
• Settlement organizing

Community outreach activities

• Metro North Chamber of Commerce – Education Minnesota member participant
• Political party fundraiser – dinners and events

State and national leadership activities

• AFT Conference attendee
• AFT – Career and Technical Education (CTE) Task Force
• AFT – Program and Policy Council (PPC)
• AFL-CIO General Board – member
• Minneapolis Regional Labor Federation – Executive Committee member at-large
• NEA – Board meeting officer training
• NEA Leadership Summit
• NEA – Federal lobby day participant
• NEA – Conference on Racial and Social Justice attendee
• National Council of State Education Associations – Leadership conference attendee
• National Council of Urban Education Associations – Large local membership project

Being the voice for the members of Education Minnesota has been both an honor and a privilege that has created multiple opportunities for input and guidance, on these events and committees as well as others. Thank you for the opportunity to be your vice president for 12 wonderful years.
Secretary-Treasurer’s report

Rodney Rowe, secretary-treasurer

Thank you for attending the 2019 Education Minnesota Representative Convention. The work you are about to do as an elected delegate to this year’s convention is vitally important. Serving as your secretary-treasurer and working with the elected leaders and members of Education Minnesota has been rewarding and I continue to welcome the opportunities to visit your locals, your classrooms and your work places as we face the educational challenges of today as educators.

It is my pleasure to report to you my activities and involvement over the past year.

Trainings and workshops

Training opportunities were offered to treasurer, secretary and membership chairs throughout the year. I have worked closely with the finance and membership departments to help provide trainings related to local finances, creating a local budget, reconciling membership rosters, internal audit committee trainings, federal requirements, applications, meeting minutes, document retention and compliance issues. Since the 2018 Representative Convention, I have had the opportunity to work with 203 locals or intermediate organizations and 357 members who are treasurers, secretaries, membership contacts or local leaders throughout the state through the multiple trainings that have been offered. I have also provided one-on-one assistance to various locals whenever a local requests it.

Newsletters, handbooks and communication

An electronic newsletter for treasurers and membership contacts is sent out on a regular basis providing them with relevant information to assist their work. The treasurer’s handbook was last updated in 2016 and is distributed to all incoming new treasurers in the fall or as requested. The handbook for membership chairs is distributed on a yearly basis since it contains all the updates for the transmittal of dues, how they are calculated and the amounts that dues have been set at. Updated resources and a copy of the treasurer and membership handbooks are found in the local leaders section on the Education Minnesota website (www.educationminnesota.org).

Budget and finance committee

As the secretary-treasurer, I serve as chair of Education Minnesota’s Budget and Finance Committee. The committee develops Education Minnesota’s annual budget, reviews the financial statement of activities at each meeting, discusses and reviews the annual audit and oversees the Education Minnesota Investment Policy. The committee monitors the critical benchmarks on the financial dashboard monthly, which could result in the local making adjustments within the current budget.
Committees and boards

In addition to the above committees, I serve as a member (either active or ex-officio) of the following:

• Budget and Finance Committee, chair
• Constitution and Bylaws Committee
• Council of Local Presidents
• Credentials Committee
• Crisis Fund Committee, treasurer
• Economic Services Incorporated (ESI) Board, treasurer
• Education Minnesota 401(k) Advisory Committee
• Education Minnesota Employee Pension Advisory Committee
• Education Minnesota Foundation Board of Trustees, treasurer
• Education Minnesota Insurance Labor Management Committee
• Education Minnesota Retired, officer liaison
• Education Support Professionals Council of Local Presidents
• Elections Committee
• Ethnic Minority Affairs Committee
• Executive Committee
• Governing Board
• Human Rights Committee
• Internal Education Minnesota Structures Committee
• Intermediate Organization Leaders
• Investment Committee
• Leadership Development Committee
• Legislative Action Committee
• Officer Compensation Committee
• Personnel/Employment Committee
• Political Action Committee
• Professional Advocacy Committee
• Recruitment and Retention Committee
• RC Rules Committee
• Statement of Principles Committee

Member services work

• Crisis and Settlement Organizing Fund, assessment facilitator
• Beat the Odds, Children’s Defense Fund Dinner
• Education Support Professional (ESP) regional meetings
• ESI Golf Tournament fundraiser, participant
• Local negotiations rallies and special events
• Minnesota Book Awards, attendee
• Minnesota Education Equity Partnership
• Nellie Stone Johnson Scholarship Program Board of Directors
• OutFront gala, attendee
• Political party fundraiser dinners and events
• State Fair booth/labor parade
• TakeAction Minnesota awards celebration, attendee
State and national activities

- AFT Convention, delegate
- AFT TEACH, attendee
- National Council of State Education Associations, conferences/trainings/presenter
- NEA Education Support Professional National Conference, attendee
- NEA Federal Lobby Day, participant
- NEA Leadership Summit, presenter
- NEA Representative Assembly, delegate
- NEA Secretary-Treasurer’s Role Alike Liaison
- NEA Secretary-Treasurer’s Trainings, presenter
- NEA Business Management Executives, presenter
- Public Employees Retirement Association (PERA), officer liaison
- St Paul Teachers Retirement Fund Association (SPTRFA), officer liaison
- Summer Seminar, presenter
- Teachers Retirement Association (TRA), officer liaison
- United Educators Credit Union Scholarship Selection Committee
Executive director’s report

Sara Gjerdrum, executive director

Welcome to the 2019 Education Minnesota Representative Convention! The past year was noteworthy for a Supreme Court decision, membership loyalty and a historic election.

Details around those notable activities, as well as other work done in the various departments of Education Minnesota, are described in this binder. I encourage you to read these reports to learn about the many accomplishments of talented members and staff, working on your behalf. Please feel free to contact me with any feedback or questions.

In addition to the reports, I note some major challenges and successes of the past year.

Challenges:

- The *Janus v. AFSCME* decision had been expected from the Supreme Court for more than a year. Not knowing when the decision would come was a challenge but also a gift of time. We used this time to prepare with extraordinary efforts in locals and throughout Education Minnesota.

- In the fall of 2018, Education Minnesota was named in the *Hoekman* lawsuit along with the AFT, NEA and two local affiliates, in which members are seeking refunds of fair-share fees and union dues collected prior to the U.S. Supreme Court’s decision in the *Janus* case. This case is similar to over 30 cases filed public sector unions across the country. We are working closely with NEA and AFT, which are funding our representation by outside counsel. Combining our legal efforts with the expertise of our national affiliates continues to be an extraordinary benefit for all of us.

- More than 33,000 Education Minnesota members did not vote in the 2014 midterm election. This meant they were likely to not vote in the 2018 midterm election also. This was one of the challenges facing us in 2017-18. Moreover, it was a driving force in the work done by local leaders, worksite action leaders and Education Minnesota staff if we hoped to be successful in the 2018 gubernatorial and House election.
Successes:

• The Janus v. AFSCME decision was announced on June 27, 2018, and we were ready. Districts were sent letters to stop fair-share fee deductions. Local leaders were ready to have conversations with fair-share fee payers about joining as full members and conversations with current members about the continued value of belonging. As of April 17, 2019, our membership numbers show the strong results of all that preparation:
  ▶ 2,937 new hires joined as active members.
  ▶ 1,059 fair-share fee payers flipped to active membership.
  ▶ Only 639 members dropped their membership (less than 1 percent of active members).

• Five new locals joined Education Minnesota during the past 12 months, with a total potential membership of more than 750 members. These newest locals know the importance and power of their voice in improving their working conditions and student learning conditions.

• The 2018 election was a huge victory for public education, electing a teacher as governor, a teacher as state auditor, and the appointment of a teacher as the new commissioner of education. The Minnesota House was also up for election and a majority of pro-education candidates were elected, resulting in the election of 75 DFL representatives and 59 Republican representatives.

• From our Worksite Action Leader program, the Election Day results were stunning:
  ▶ 2,067 members committed to getting out the vote at work!
  ▶ 1,559 trained worksite action leaders were at 1,051 buildings.
  ▶ 19,912 members who skipped voting in 2014 were covered by a trained leader.

• Critical equity work has also continued during this very busy year. More than 50 members have been trained as Racial Equity Advocates around the state to dismantle institutional racism in their schools and communities. Their local trainings have touched the lives of more than 500 members in introductory level racial equity courses.

Listed above are just a few of the challenges and successes we experienced during the past year. The reports that follow will give more details and I hope you will make time to read about the exciting work being done on your behalf.

Education Minnesota began in 1998 with a membership of 64,212. Today our membership is more than 75,000. Our work and our membership continue to grow. Thank you for the privilege of being involved in that work as the executive director of Education Minnesota.
NEA directors’ report

The Education Minnesota NEA Directors serve as the liaison between the NEA Board and Education Minnesota. NEA directors lobby the U.S. congressional delegation from Minnesota about issues regarding education as well as help shape policy for the NEA, one of two national organizations to which we belong. NEA directors are elected at the Representative Convention for three-year terms. We currently have three state-elected directors: Nancy Cordes, Robin Courrier and Don Sinner; as well as three nationally-elected representatives, ESPs at-large Ellen Olsen and Brenda Johnson, and Amethyst Stegbauer for the Aspiring Educator program; and one Ethnic Minority Caucus Chair, Tucker Quetone, Native American/Alaskan Native Caucus.

NEA directors attend quarterly board meetings where we are asked to discuss and make decisions regarding the NEA budget, policy, governance structure, membership and to lobby Congress on education issues. This year’s NEA Representative Assembly will be held in Houston, Texas over the Fourth of July week.

As a merged state, Minnesota brings to the NEA a unique perspective regarding governance and membership that most states do not have. This year, your directors have been able to lend insight to discussions about the NEA governance structure and the importance of labor affiliations and partnerships in successfully achieving a pro-education agenda.

We continue to bring local concerns to Minnesota’s senators and congressional delegation in Washington, D.C. Over the past year, we have spent much of our time ensuring that educator voices are heard in matters that affect public education given Secretary of Education Betsy DeVos and the Trump Administration are pro-voucher and privatization. In May, we will continue to advocate for funding of IDEA at levels originally intended to eliminate the “cross-subsidy” that creates budgeting issues for every school district, passage of Bipartisan Background Checks Act (HR 8) the Rebuild America’s Schools Act, the Addressing Teacher Shortage Act, and legislation to fund school-based health centers. We will also continue our work to ensure the rights of all of our students, including those under Title IX for women, LBGT and people of color which are currently under attack by the administration. We work hard to establish positive relationships with our elected officials and welcome your suggestions and stories to take with us to Capitol Hill.

In an effort to support the election of pro-education candidates, NEA directors are responsible for raising money for the NEA Fund for Children and Public Education. We work closely with Education Minnesota staffer Jim Meyer, who also assists us with our Capitol Hill lobbying, on promoting efforts such as payroll deduction and the GO Fund to raise these funds.
On the local level, NEA directors are happy to visit local and IO meetings in order to share information and gather stories to take with us to Washington, D.C. Please contact any one of us to attend a meeting. We welcome suggestions, questions and requests for visits. You may contact us at the email addresses listed below. We thank you for your continued support and look forward to hearing from you.

**Minnesota’s NEA directors contact info:**

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Education Minnesota Foundation for Excellence in Teaching and Learning report

Dayonna Knutson, director

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Angelica Torralba-Olague
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OPEN
Congressional District 3

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Congressional District 4

Julia Berry
Independent School District 287
Congressional District 5

Andrea Vizenor
St. Croix
Congressional District 6

Becki Church
Freshwater Education District
Congressional District 7

Deanna Hron
Deer River
Congressional District 8

Myriam Castro-Franco
Richfield
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Matt Williams
MSCF
At-large

Becky Hespen
Osseo
ESP/At-large

Sue Westegaard
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Denise Specht
Centennial (on leave)
Education Minnesota president

Paul Mueller
Brooklyn Center (on leave)
Education Minnesota vice president

Rodney Rowe
Worthington (on leave)
Education Minnesota
secretary-treasurer

Dayonna Knutson
Education Minnesota
Foundation director

Vicki Turner
Collaboration Lab coordinator

Sam Jasenosky
Education Minnesota
Foundation assistant
Mission:


Beliefs:

• We advocate continuous improvement in education and the practice of teaching.

• We believe quality educators are the key ingredient in quality public education.

• We believe in access to quality educational opportunity for all Minnesotans.

• We believe research-based applications provide the basis for improved teaching and learning.

We believe Education Minnesota members committing their own financial resources to the foundation promotes and provides for creative innovations in teaching and learning.

The Education Minnesota Foundation board strives to meet the needs of educators by providing grants to support innovative projects, professional development and programs uniting educators with nonprofit organizations to address systemic improvements. In addition, the foundation promotes collaboration between administration and staff by supporting joint, collaborative projects.

The foundation provides opportunities for our members to be creative and to enhance and implement new ideas in the classroom and the school environment. Fifty-five Classroom-focused Grants were awarded in 2018-19. These projects work directly to improve teaching and learning, expand the scope and reach of their classroom projects, and provide teachers an opportunity to purchase electronic devices for student use and resources such as internet access and applications that support the projects.

The foundation awarded one teacher in the science field the Bruce Vento Science Educator Professional Development Grant. The Bruce Vento Science Educator Professional Development Grant provides educators in the science fields an opportunity to acquire and share new skills and knowledge that influence the classroom. Members applying for this grant may request up to $1,500 to acquire skills and share new learnings with their peers. We are proud to have this grant for our members and thankful to the Vento family for their support of the foundation’s work with educators.
In addition, the foundation supports members’ individual efforts to improve their professional practice. Eighty Professional Development Grants were awarded to education support professionals (ESPs), classroom teachers and higher education faculty. These funds allow Education Minnesota members at all levels to engage in needed professional development. The National Board Certified Teachers (NBCT) Scholarship was awarded to 28 members. The foundation awarded three IMPACT grants and two second year IMPACT grants that promote the research, development and adoption of policies and practices that become the basis for systemic change.

The foundation board recently approved the position of the Collaboration Lab Coordinator to facilitate administration-staff collaborative teams and projects, develop and implement programming around effective collaboration and recruit district teams to participate in the program and support the mission of the foundation.

Vicki Turner started the position on Feb. 12. Currently, she is reviewing past work and history of the foundation’s labor/management collaboration. She met with Deanna Hron to discuss her involvement with full-service community schools, and how collaboration between labor and management worked in her district. Vicki is also planning to meet with other members who were involved with labor/management collaboration pilots. She met with the building leadership team at Hmong International Academy regarding the collaboration work that they have done to increase student achievement, and they are willing to strengthen their collaboration to include union stewards at the building level. Lastly, she is currently developing training on the importance of labor/management collaboration.

For more information about the Collaboration Lab or the grants and scholarships offered by the Education Minnesota Foundation for Excellence in Teaching and Learning, please visit www.edmnfoundation.org. For questions about grants, contact Dayonna Knutson, foundation director, at dayonna.knutson@edmn.org or 651-292-4834. For questions about collaborative work in buildings or districts, contact Vicki Turner, collaboration lab coordinator, vicki.turner@edmn.org or 651-767-1288.
Retired report

Julie Jagusch, president

Education Minnesota Retired tracks three different membership numbers:

- Retired – members who have joined through a paid membership or through continuous membership.

- Pre-retired – active members who previously paid for a retired membership and will most likely receive a refund once they retire and apply for continuous membership.

- Continuous pre-retired – members who applied and qualified for continuous membership but have not official retired or their local has not submitted an updated membership roster.

As of Aug. 31, 2018, Education Minnesota Retired had 7,776 members, including 74 pre-retired and 303 continuous pre-retired members.

Through the Education Minnesota Retired website, Facebook, monthly e-newsletter and quarterly newsletter, ACTION, we effectively communicate with our members. Our website is updated frequently with an event calendar, newsletter postings, conference and meeting registration forms and more. In an effort to communicate more efficiently, Education Minnesota Retired is working to enhance its database of email addresses.

There has been much activity since the last Retired Annual Meeting. Instead of a Retired Fall Conference, Education Minnesota Retired decided to have regional meetings. These began in March 2018 in Eden Valley. Since then, we have also held regional meetings in Mankato, Detroit Lakes, Chisholm and Brooklyn Park. These meetings provided an opportunity for attendees to socialize and hear from presenters on important issues that affect our lives. The Retired Regional Meetings Committee chose the presentations and set the agenda for these events. Sessions included a legislative update, TRA update, information about the organization and an opportunity to give feedback to the Retired Governing Board about what else they would like to see from the organization. This is in response to a member survey that indicated a desire for more membership opportunities closer to their homes. We continue to look for ways to better connect with our members.

Changes to the constitution and bylaws were made that would ensure participation from all areas of the state and include higher education and ESP representatives. An ESP representative has been elected, but the seat for a higher education representative remains open.
Retired members continue to be active in the political arena and contribute to the Education Minnesota and NEA PAC. Several members of the Education Minnesota Governing Board regularly attended meetings of the Legislative Commission on Pensions and Retirement, worked with the Public Employees Pension Coalition and lobbied to help pass the pension bill last spring. Many of our members were actively involved in the fall elections. It is important that we continue to elect individuals who are supportive of our issues, such as a stable pension fund, health care and public education.

The NEA-Retired Annual Meeting was held in St. Paul on June 27-28, 2018. Education Minnesota Retired provided a welcome packet for NEA-RA delegates and assisted them in finding their way around the Twin Cities.

I want to thank the leadership of Education Minnesota, President Denise Specht, Vice President Paul Mueller and Secretary-Treasurer Rodney Rowe, for their support of our organization. Secretary-Treasurer Rodney Rowe attends most of our functions and is the liaison to the active organization.

The work of all of our members who have volunteered their time, including Retired Governing Board members, committee chairs and committee members, is very much appreciated. Additional thanks to all of our members who attend our functions. Without you, the members, there would be no organization.

The assistance from Education Minnesota staff, Shelley MacDonald, Christine Thornborrow, Matt Blewett and Deborah Skog is very valuable to the operation of Education Minnesota Retired. Their support helps our organization move forward.
Effective April 27, 2019

Education Minnesota
Retired Governing Board
President, Julie Jagusch
Vice President, Walter Munsterman
Secretary, Sharon Kjellberg
Treasurer, Lynette Wayne
Past President, Larry Koenck

Committee chairs
Bylaws – Walter Munsterman
Communications – Myrna Doran
Finance – Lynette Wayne
Government Relations/Policy Development – Joan Beaver
Membership – Judy Rohde
Nominations/Elections – Betty and Boy Toy
Program – Lois Wendt
Statements of Principal – Sharon Kjellberg

Education Minnesota Retired staff:
Matthew Blewett
Shelley MacDonald
Deborah Skog
Christine Thornborrow

Congressional District Directors
District 1 – Ed Mikulich
District 1 – Cathy Stringfield
District 2 – Wes Hanna
District 2 – Jerry Klebs
District 3 – Adele Munsterman
District 3 – Boy Toy
District 4 – VACANT
District 4 – Judy Rohde
District 5 – Myrna Doran
District 5 – Lois Wendt
District 6 – Joan Beaver
District 6 – Warren Misiewicz
District 7 – Charles Hellie
District 7 – Wes Tessman
District 8 – Roberta Margo
District 8 – Jan Cummings
At Large – Lori Nord
At Large – Sandra Skaar
ESI leadership report

Peter Eckhoff, ESI board chair
Shelley MacDonald, ESI executive director

ESI is committed to providing quality, competitively priced programs that feature consumer-oriented service for Education Minnesota members.

As the member benefit arm of Education Minnesota, ESI strives to make members’ lives better by using the bargaining power of more than 86,000 members to negotiate discounts and special benefit options to maximize their hard-earned dollars, plan for their future and protect themselves and their loved ones. When members find value and participate in sponsored programs, they can save time and money. Moreover, revenue generated from member participation goes back to members and the organization in the form of educational seminars, additional programming and contributions. ESI also builds awareness among members of member benefits available through the NEA and AFT.

Support, commitment and partnership with Education Minnesota

ESI makes significant contributions to Education Minnesota to enhance events and the overall member experience. Contributions include:

- Events and prizes: $66,000
- Advertising: $55,000
- Workshop expenses: $52,000
- Rent: $120,000 - ESI rents office space in several Education Minnesota field offices so EFS Advisors can conveniently meet with members in the locals they service.
- Identity theft recovery plan cost: $63,000
- Education Minnesota Foundation: $44,000

Charitable giving

The annual charitable golf tournament to support the Education Minnesota Foundation for Excellence in Teaching and Learning is one of the most rewarding ways ESI supports the organization. The scramble tournament participants include members, local leaders, officers, staff and many very generous businesses who work with Education Minnesota and ESI. ESI funds all expenses for the tournament so that all monies contributed by participating golfers, sponsoring companies and business partners go directly to the foundation. Contributions totaled $44,000 for the 2018 tournament, for a combined total of $765,000 raised since the tournament’s inception in 1993. The 26th charitable tournament is Aug. 12, 2019.
Financial strength

In fiscal year 2017-18, participation in member benefits generated $1,149,000 in revenue, offset by $846,000 in expenses and $98,000 in income taxes. ESI remains well poised to continue to support Education Minnesota and individual members through contributions, discounts and service and consumer education.

2017-18 highlights

Member engagement
176 local engagement activities

Member benefits play a role in many local engagement efforts as local leaders, membership chairs, field staff and member advocates utilize member benefits in conversations and events. Many locals and intermediate organizations held 10-minute member benefits meetings or hosted hour-long member benefit presentations, and provided on-site enrollment for the ESI complimentary identity theft recovery plan. Additionally, ESI enhances state, local and IO events with member benefit exhibits. ESI continues to build awareness of the opportunity for members to find value in their membership by taking advantage of savings opportunities.

Outreach and participation
6,674 new benefit transactions

Committed to making access to benefits convenient, ESI provided information, giveaways and prizes at 78 local, IO and state events with an opportunity for over 7,500 members to engage with program specialists.

There were 6,674 new benefit transactions in the 2017-18 fiscal year. That number represents financial accounts opened, policies sold, loans serviced or closed, beneficiary registrations, registrations for no-cost benefits and online discount shopping programs.

No-cost benefits demonstrate value
8,487 registered for identity theft recovery plan

Promotion of Education Minnesota ESI, NEA and AFT no-cost benefits shows members some of the ways their professional unions are dedicated to protecting them. ESI provides a complimentary identity theft recovery plan to active teacher and ESP members. National no-cost benefits include NEA complimentary introductory term life insurance for new members in their first year, as well as complimentary life and accidental death and dismemberment coverage for all members. AFT offers group term life insurance at no cost for one year to all new members who designate a beneficiary.

ESI is available to assist locals who want to increase member registration in these no-cost benefits by providing opportunities for onsite registration, as well as materials and registration forms.
Education – financial and retirement planning seminars
98 seminars/2,500 attendees

ESI helps members plan for retirement by providing educational seminars. To increase member connections with their locals, ESI held most financial/retirement planning seminars in field offices, providing an opportunity for local presidents to welcome members and talk about important retirement benefits that are part of their local contracts.

Early career educators benefit from understanding the importance of beginning to save early in their career with tax-deferred accounts. Members closer to retirement are interested in learning their pension options. With the passage of pension legislation in 2018, members who attend ESI financial and retirement planning seminars gain an understanding of how their defined benefit pensions work. Meeting with a pension counselor to review their account is strongly encouraged. They will also learn about social security, investment options and how to protect their hard-earned assets.

EFS Advisors, the ESI-sponsored financial services program, helps hundreds of new members begin contributing to a 403(b) account every year, and works with thousands of members to create and manage a financial plan that keeps them on a path toward reaching their financial goals in retirement.

EFS Advisors can also assist members with life insurance, legacy planning and more. Members transitioning into retirement can continue to seek assistance for asset management and distribution.

ESI seminars continue to be a valuable resource for members from the beginning of their career all the way through retirement.

Member-driven, member-approved programs

The ESI advisory committee uses a rigorous review process to bring a program sponsorship recommendation forward to the ESI board. Selection criteria include price, value, integrity of the company providing the product or service, the company’s commitment to members and the organization and more. With a member representative from each election district and several membership categories, the advisory committee is committed to ensuring programs meet the needs of all members.
Looking ahead

Local level support

ESI will continue to offer educational seminars at Education Minnesota field offices, when possible, encouraging local presidents and field staff to provide information on local contract benefits as they pertain to financial and retirement planning. With locals playing a more prominent role in the seminars, they are more relevant, convenient and well attended.

Member benefit ambassadors

In partnership with NEA Member Benefits, ESI is developing a plan whereby a cadre of member benefit ambassadors will share member benefit information with colleagues in their locals, carrying the message forward that member benefits can provide value in both their professional and personal lives.

Communication

ESI will work to develop more effective and efficient means of communicating with members, including electronic communication such as webinars and videos. This will allow members to access benefit information when it is most convenient for them.

Created in 1973, ESI is the member benefit arm of Education Minnesota, created to offer products and services to enhance members’ economic status by providing programs of exceptional value. As a for-profit subsidiary of Education Minnesota, all ESI revenues inure to the benefit of the membership and the organization.

ESI staff

• Shelley MacDonald, executive director
• Matthew Blewett, accounting and program specialist
• Christine Thornborrow, marketing director
• Lyle Nelson, retirement consultant
• Deb Skog, office and events specialist
Field services report

The field services department of Education Minnesota works directly with local leaders and members to empower them through advocacy, organizing and service. We deliver training to leaders and members on a wide variety of topics, with a focus on building local union strength. We help locals defend their collective bargaining agreements. We advise and represent members to uphold their rights. We work with negotiation teams and local settlement teams to help negotiate the best collective bargaining agreements possible. We advise local leaders on education issues and help with professional development. We assist intermediate organizations with planning and carrying out all their training needs and meetings.

The department is committed to the principle that we are here to assist leaders and members with their union. Our goal is to nurture a culture of organizing and empowerment within Education Minnesota locals and affiliates. While our staff deal with many issues every day, we never lose sight of the fact that Education Minnesota’s strength lies in its locals and members, and it is our job to help members, locals and affiliates find that strength and put it to use for our members.

Education Minnesota is a growing and ever-changing organization.

As of this report, we represent:

- 462 locals of licensed preK-12 members in public schools, education districts and state residential schools. Within the 462 locals we have:
  - Four charter school locals
  - Five private school locals
  - 103 education support professional locals

- 39 local chapters covering 47 campuses in our Minnesota State College Faculty state affiliate.

- One faculty union at UM-Duluth and UM-Crookston.

To serve these varied constituencies, the field services department is comprised of the following leadership team and field staff:

Leadership team

Rob Gardner, manager of field services
Dan Rivera, manager of field services
Cindy Arntzen-Haffely, executive assistant
Field offices

Apple Valley
Teresa Gregory, field office assistant
Cheryl Rosheim, field staff
Aaron VanMoorlehem, field staff

Bemidji
Andrea Johnson, field office assistant
Vanessa Pulkrabek, field staff
Kevin Young, field staff

Brooklyn Park
Molly Adams, field office assistant
Beth Anderson, field staff
Duane Anderson, field staff
Jillian Anderson, field office assistant
Sandy Miller, field staff

Coon Rapids
Jennifer Adriaens, field office assistant
Anna Dougherty, field staff
Janie Hemmelgarn, field office assistant
David Hoaglund, field staff
David Kundin, field staff

Detroit Lakes
Rhonda Hopkins, field office assistant
Michelle Jensen, field staff
Mark Richardson, field staff
Richard Wood, field staff

Duluth
Kathleen Adee, field staff
Terry Keefe Peterson, field office assistant
Evan Sandstede, field staff

Duluth UEA
Kathleen Adee, field staff
Jesse Dykhuis, field office assistant

Hibbing
Sarah Hron, field office assistant
Greg Miller, field staff
Evan Sandstede, field staff

Mankato
Scott Allen, field staff
Jan Anderson, field staff
Donna Leff, field office assistant

New Brighton
Kevin Nielsen, field staff
Barb Palma, field office assistant

Rochester
Kathy Erie, field office assistant
Jeff Hyma, field staff
Angel Morales, field staff
Curt Rock, field staff
Cherie Weller, field office assistant
Southwest Metro
Luke Fernholz, field staff
Marie Fernholz, field staff
Christeen Gotsch, field office assistant
Eric Herrmann, field staff
Taylor Jacobs, field office assistant
Adam Janiak, field staff
Deb Johnson, field staff
Steve McLuckie, field staff
Jeremy Swenson, field staff

St. Cloud
Jan Lichy, field staff
Emily Mateo, field staff
Jodi Meyer, field staff
Doug Nelson, field staff
Todd Pack, field staff
Monica Sturm, field office assistant
Clara Waddell, field office assistant

Willmar
Tammy Barnes, field staff
Libby Erickson, field staff
Debra Zinda Hanson, field office assistant

Windom
Jackie Baumgard, field staff
Alicia Entinger, field office assistant
James Schmidt, field staff

Woodbury
Debbie Kinney, field office assistant
Alyssa Mueller, field staff
Tony Vega, field staff
Steve Winge, field staff

The Field Services department also includes the membership department and the Minnesota State College Faculty (MSCF).

Membership
Dan Rivera, manager of field services
Michelle Johnson, membership/dues accounting supervisor
Sarah Mehrman, membership production technician
Cindy Smith, dues accounting technician

Minnesota State College Faculty (MSCF)
Rob Gardner, manager of field services
Ilissa Morrow, executive assistant
Kari Ann Cruz, field staff
Janel Engesser, field office assistant
Chip Dykstra, field staff
Matt Ryg, field staff
Part-time field staff program

Four individuals were hired in fall 2018 to participate in Education Minnesota’s Part-Time Field Staff Program. They joined three other part-time staff hired in the fall of 2017. This program provides training and real field staff work experience under the guidance of current field staff mentors. Part-time field staff employees continue to work full time as teachers or ESPs while working up to 300 hours per year for Education Minnesota.

Each part-time field staff person commits to a two-year appointment. Currently, part-time staff includes:

Shannon Barrett, Rochester office
Jodi Meyer, St. Cloud office
Dennis Fischer, Detroit Lakes office
Paul Seeba, Brooklyn Park office
Tony Jirschele, Duluth office
Katy Tharaldson, New Brighton office

Core Training

Education Minnesota’s Core Trainings are focused on building strong, effective locals. This statewide program builds on the strength within locals to help build a solid foundation for success. The trainings give leaders and members information and skills in five important areas: member rights, negotiations, local organizing, health insurance and peer review. Education Minnesota staff facilitate each training opportunity. The number of members completing Core Training programs, within the last 12 months, are shown below:

Member Rights Advocacy I..........................................................150 participants
Member Rights Advocacy II.........................................................86
Member Rights Advocacy III.......................................................29
Certified Negotiator Program.....................................................70
Certified Negotiator Program ESP..............................................46
Peer Review: Strategies for Success..........................................9
Health Insurance Basics and Beyond.........................................8

Each year, the Core Training calendar can be found on the Education Minnesota website under Events. Core Training events are open to all Education Minnesota members.
Professional development for educators

Professional training sessions were offered at events such as fall drive-ins, local meetings, IO meetings, regional meetings, spring drive-ins and overnighters.

Trainings were offered in the areas of:

• AFT Professional Development License Renewal
• ESI Member Benefits
• Field services
• Legal
• Local leader training
• Policy, research and outreach
• Public affairs

Emerging Leaders

The Education Minnesota Emerging Leaders Program received 38 applications to participate in the 2018 program. Thirty-eight of the applicants were chosen to attend the leadership program with 23 participants successfully completing the program.

Education Minnesota is committed to working with locals to identify and prepare members to become the union leaders of tomorrow through our Emerging Leaders Program.

This program is designed to prepare members to:

• Identify aspects of quality leadership.
• Develop their own leadership potential.
• Understand personality and generational differences.
• Explore leadership opportunities within the union.
• Develop the ability to engage members one on one.
• Embrace diversity in the workplace.
• Manage conflict for positive outcomes.
• Know the issues which have faced educators in the past.
• Lead educators to face the issues of tomorrow.

The program, trainers and staff continue to reach out to new leaders and maintain relationships with past alumni, encouraging the application of learned leadership skills and member engagement.
Registration for the 2019 Emerging Leaders is now open. Visit the RC booth for more information.

High education: Minnesota State College Faculty (MSCF)

Leadership

MSCF continues to engage in future planning for their organization in a post-fair-share fee world. Officers and executive committee members, along with facilitators from Education Minnesota, have worked through a number of different proposed changes concerning both dues and organizational structure. This spring, officers have been bringing these proposals to local chapters and membership for discussion prior to the annual MSCF Delegate Assembly on April 12. MSCF is electing a new president this spring, with election results to be certified at the April MSCF Board of Directors meeting.

Political action

MSCF will hold lobby days this legislative session. Members of the MSCF Legislative Steering Committee, officers and staff are promoting MSCF priorities with legislators and are working to increase the governor’s budget request for Minnesota State. MSCF will continue their legislative postcard campaign to target new legislators and educate them about MSCF, as well as about their colleges and programs.

Membership

The MSCF Membership Engagement and Recruitment Committee (MERC) is implementing its plans for union membership in a post-fair share environment. The MERC is planning to host additional spring trainings for both chapter leaders (and members) on having more and consistent one-on-one conversations, especially targeting new hires. MSCF membership statewide is at approximately 71 percent. Temporary and part-time faculty are an area of focus for future membership recruitment.

Negotiations

The MSCF Bargaining Team has been meeting to prepare for negotiations with Minnesota State. The team surveyed membership and has engaged in a variety of activities to seek input on bargaining priorities. Dates for bargaining have yet to be set. The statewide joint insurance coalition bargaining has also prepared to begin negotiations. MSCF has three seats on the coalition and works jointly with all other state bargaining units as a team to negotiate insurance benefits with Minnesota Management and Budget (MMB).
Higher education: University Education Association (UEA)

The University Education Association continues to support the ever-changing needs of the local: membership renewals, grievance investigations and member rights, negotiations, political engagement and professional development. The UEA-Duluth Executive Committee continues to meet weekly throughout the academic year and every other week during the summer. The UEA-Crookston Executive Committee meets as needed to address member and/or local needs.

Membership

Executive committee representatives are meeting with members at department level meetings to talk about the union about the value of belonging to the UEA and Education Minnesota.

Grievance and member rights

The UEA Executive Committee fields many questions and concerns from members regarding a variety of contract issues. A grievance was settled without arbitration. The settlement was quite favorable to the member and local. The local is working to settle a second grievance and is waiting for the university to respond.

Negotiations

The UEA contract is settled through June 30, 2020.

Political engagement

UEA continues to work with its administration to secure additional funding for the Duluth campus. They participate with the campus community in a variety of lobby efforts in St. Paul.

Education Minnesota Student Program

The Education Minnesota Student Program Council and staff have continued to be busy at work planning the EMSP Spring Conference, April 12-13.

The nomination period for the 2019-20 council opened in late February and closed on March 12. At the closing, there were four applicants for council positions. After the staff have consulted with the EMSP Elections Committee, the results will be shared with the member applicants.

This year’s council members are doing a great amount of outreach via social media, and the EMSP staff team is working to continue its engagement with chapters and advisors by providing training on campuses.

Crisis and Settlement Organizing Fund

The Education Minnesota Crisis and Settlement Organizing Fund represents a commitment to assist local/state affiliates and members during protracted bargaining and strikes. Affiliates include any Education Minnesota local/state affiliate organization organized under and functioning within the Constitution and Bylaws of Education Minnesota.
The Crisis and Settlement Organizing Fund is intended to assist members and local/state affiliates in collective bargaining crises. The Crisis and Settlement Organizing Fund shall not be considered a source of revenue for routine expenditures.

There are currently 86 locals in various phases of the crisis fund process. There are 48 active loans that total $796,345.36.

Number of settlement meetings by month

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Month</th>
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Loan and grant balance totals, 2015-17 contract

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<tr>
<th>Local</th>
<th>Loan amount</th>
<th>Grant approved</th>
<th>Payments</th>
<th>Balance owed</th>
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<tr>
<td>Community School of Excellence</td>
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<td>($3,908.16)</td>
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<td>TOTALS</td>
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## Loan and grant balance totals, 2017-19 contract

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<th>Loan amount</th>
<th>Grant approved</th>
<th>Payments</th>
<th>Startup funds</th>
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<td>Alexandria</td>
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## Loan and grant balance totals, 2019-21 contract

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**TOTALS**

|                  | $1,474,120.19 | $824,038.60 | $779,492.13 | $18,686.76 | $141,240.50 |

## Loan and grant balance totals, 2021-23 contract

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**TOTALS**

|                  | $635,555.01  | $1,606.46 | $2,842.98 | $250.00 | $630,955.57 |

## Loan and grant balance totals, 2021-23 contract

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<th>Grant approved</th>
<th>Payments</th>
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**TOTALS**

|                  | $19,000.00    |               |           |               | $19,000.00   |
# General counsel/legal department report

## Legal department staff:

David Aron, general counsel  
Mary Claire Brengman, paralegal  
Nicole Blissenbach, staff attorney  
Deb Corhouse, staff attorney  
Allison Cossetta, legal assistant  
Cedrick Frazier, staff attorney  
Paula Johnston, staff attorney  
Sarah Litz, legal assistant  
Meg Luger-Nikolai, staff attorney  
Adosh Unni, staff attorney

## Overview

First and foremost, the legal department provides a wide variety of legal services to members and locals, ranging from job protection matters to contract enforcement and unfair labor practices, to defense of public sector union rights. Our robust training and learning sessions on legal issues affecting members help members and staff identify and manage situations as they arise. We focus on working closely with other department staff to provide prompt and accurate information, consultation, and advice to members, locals and affiliates. We provide legal support in all areas of Education Minnesota’s work, such as legislation, negotiations, professional development, organizing, vendor transactions and public elections/campaigns.

## Member and local representation

Last fiscal year (Sept. 1, 2017-Aug. 31, 2018), staff attorneys represented both individual members and locals/affiliates in more than 356 cases, a 19 percent increase over the previous year. These cases included:

- 130 contract grievance cases, challenging violations of the collective bargaining agreement by an employer.
- 85 licensure (boards of teaching, nursing, and social work) investigations
- 12 long-term disability appeals
- Two unfair labor practice lawsuits in district court: one challenging the Chisholm School District’s failure to bargain with the exclusive representative in good faith, which settled favorably, and another on behalf of MSCF challenging Minnesota State’s failure to comply with an arbitration award that ordered the system to calculate workload differently and provide backpay to faculty members for inaccurate workload calculations.
The legal department also referred 69 members to outside counsel for representation in 12 job-related criminal investigations, down from 37 the previous year, and 57 investigations of alleged maltreatment or neglect, down from 74 cases the previous year. The majority of allegations investigated by the Minnesota Department of Education and law enforcement do not result in findings of maltreatment or criminal charges. These outside attorney services are available to members at no charge as another benefit of union membership.

Although many of the grievances in which we represent locals are resolved through negotiated settlement agreements, the legal department also represents locals in binding arbitration when a favorable resolution to a grievance is not possible. The following are summaries of successful arbitration cases from the past year:

**MSCF and Minnesota State (Fogelberg, 2018)**

- Decision: State violated CBA by denying an early retirement incentive payment to a professor based on his seniority date, where the CBA required an eligibility determination based on date of hire. District must pay the retirement incentive.

- Takeaways: Plain language will typically win the day even if there is an assertion that something other than the apparent meaning was intended.

**Ely Education Association and ISD 696 (Jacobs, 2018)**

- Decision: District violated CBA by denying full-time teacher married to another teacher in the district a separate $2,000 VEBA contribution even though she was enrolled in the district’s plan. District must continue providing the contribution.

- Takeaways: Past practice is binding on a district even when new board members do not like the old practice.

**Melrose Federation of Teachers and ISD No. 740, Melrose (McCoy, 2018)**

- Decision: “One lane change per contract year” means one lane movement based on approved credits, not one 15-credit lane movement per year. District must grant the full lane change and make the two affected teachers whole for the salary differential.

- Takeaways: Maintaining detailed bargaining notes and documentation of previous lane changes can help support a local’s interpretation of past practice and intent when administration changes and takes a different interpretation.
Other significant litigation

The legal department has also been involved in two significant lawsuits with profound implications for the rights of our members and locals.

Forslund v. State, Minnesota Court of Appeals (2019)

- Parents of students in a number of metro-area districts sued the state, alleging that Minnesota’s continuing contract and tenure laws threaten their education and violate the students’ rights under the Education and Equal Protection clauses of the Minnesota Constitution.

- The district court and court of appeals dismissed the suit, but the Minnesota Supreme Court sent the case back to the court of appeals for consideration on other grounds.

- The court of appeals dismissed the case a second time in January 2019, finding that the plaintiffs’ education clause rights had not been violated because they had not alleged that the challenged laws result in the complete denial of an adequate education.

- The court also rejected the plaintiffs’ equal protection claim on the ground that the plaintiffs did not allege that they shared any defining trait other than being adversely affected by the continuing contract and tenure laws.

- The plaintiffs did not appeal the decision, meaning that the three-year lawsuit is finally over.

- Education Minnesota filed two amicus briefs defending the laws, as did NEA and AFT. Courts in California and New Jersey have rejected similar challenges.

Hoekman v. Education Minnesota (2018 and ongoing)

- In June 2018, the U.S. Supreme Court issued Janus v. AFSCME, which overturned 40 years of case law and held that collecting fair-share fees from non-members is unconstitutional.

- Education Minnesota has fully complied with the decision and no longer collects fair-share fees from non-members.

- Shortly before the Janus decision, a group of current and former Minnesota teachers sued Education Minnesota, NEA and AFT, claiming that the decision entitles them to refunds of fair-share fees and dues collected prior to the decision.

- Education Minnesota believes the claims are without merit, and Education Minnesota attorneys are working with outside counsel retained by NEA and AFT to defend the organization.

- Similar cases have been filed against public sector unions around the country in states that allowed the collection of fair-share fees. A number of federal district courts have dismissed these cases.
Support from AFT/NEA

Both AFT and NEA reimburse a percentage of the time Education Minnesota attorneys spend representing members and locals. For the 2017-18 fiscal year we received:

- $227,037 of case expense reimbursement from the NEA;
- $57,947 of case reimbursement from the AFT; and
- Access to the wide array of AFT and NEA legal resources, including research memos, conferences and advice and counsel from their staff attorneys. This counsel has been particularly important in the Forslund and Hoekman cases, discussed above, since these lawsuits are part of a larger national trend of attacks on educator and union rights.

Advocacy, advice and consultation, and training

A significant portion of the legal department’s work is proactive, including:

- Thousands of calls and emails providing support to field staff and members on matters ranging from the issues listed above to staff development, prep time, workload, past practices, social media use, harassment, non-disclosure agreements, personnel files, equipment costs, TDE, compensation, health insurance, retirement/deferred compensation benefits, sabbaticals, First Amendment rights and everything in between.

- Ongoing guidance and training to local leaders, governance and staff regarding compliance and best practices following the Janus decision.

- More than 100 workshops for leaders and members during the past year on a wide range of issues including social media, legal rights of members and special education challenges.

- Education Minnesota attorneys continue to be recognized for their expertise and are frequently asked to train attorney groups at the state and national levels.

- One of our attorneys serves as the governor-appointed union representative on the Public Employment Relations Board (PERB) as well as the Bureau of Mediation Services (BMS) advisory committee.

- Education Minnesota attorneys are active in various sections and committees of the Minnesota State Bar Association, and participate in the state-affiliate attorney networks sponsored by the AFT and the NEA.

- Representing Education Minnesota as a stakeholder as the Public Educator Licensing and Standards Board developed and then implemented rules relating to the 2017 tiered licensure law.

- Advising the organization on education and labor policy, testifying on legislation relating to educator licensure, the code of ethics, academic freedom, pensions, health insurance, educators of color, early childhood, adult, and special education and union freedoms.
Committee support

The legal department also advises and supports Education Minnesota’s standing committees and independent boards, as well as internal staff committees, including:

- Representative Convention Committees (Constitution and Bylaws, Credentials, Elections, Rules)
- Education Minnesota Retired
- Economic Services Inc. (ESI)
- Education Minnesota Governing Board
- Education Minnesota Political Action Committee
- Our Diverse and Healthy Workplace Committee (ODHW) (internal)
- Value of Belonging Committee (internal)

Our commitment to members

- Provide high-quality representation and education to our members and locals.
- Honor public education and public sector unions.
- Offer intentional support to enrich both member work and member professional development.
- Value and respect each of the members and locals who become our clients.

We are proud and appreciative of you—our members—and hope that you value our work as part of belonging to the union.
Human resources report

Shane Patrick, director

The Education Minnesota human resources department includes activities in the areas of human resources, facilities and the print shop. They operate under the direction of:

• Shane Patrick, director of human resources/facilities

The human resources department consists of the following staff:

• Katie Hunter, human resources generalist
• Sarah Litz, legal/HR assistant

The facilities services and print shop include the following staff:

• Robert Lorence, facilities and print shop supervisor
• Robert Afflerbaugh, production technician
• Joseph Hensel, production technician
• Ameen Ford, custodian
• William Anderson-Mattocks, custodian

The human resources department is responsible for Education Minnesota’s staff and labor relations activities, including recruitment, staffing and retention, personnel policies, performance management, job classification and compensation, benefits, regulatory compliance, risk management, safety, security and wellness. Education Minnesota has 150 staff employees with two bargaining units, The Education Minnesota Professional Organization (TEMPO), which is the professional staff of Education Minnesota, the United Staff of Minnesota (USM), the office professional staff and two non-bargaining management groups, associate executive staff (AES) and executive staff (ES). Employee counts are currently:

• TEMPO – 83
• USM – 47
• AES – 11
• ES – 9

Turnover/recruitment

Since March 2018, Education Minnesota has hired 42 employees. These hires included full-time, part-time, temporary campaign project staff and long-term temporary full-time employees. These 42 employees gained employment through a rigorous and compliant recruitment process. The recruitment process included 44 job postings and over 1,000 applications for employment since the 2018 Representative Convention. The turnover rate for Education Minnesota is 12
percent. This is on par with our annual average but higher than last year where the turnover rate was only 5 percent. The majority of turnover is the result of employee retirements. The turnover rate does not include 24 employees hired in as temporary positions to assist with GOTV, term-ending part-time field staff program participants, new positions and campaign project staff.

Recruiting the best employees to engage and support our members is top priority for the HR department. Open jobs are emailed daily through a community and diversity outreach program connecting our jobs with active and passive job seekers from our community partners. The community and diversity outreach partners receive jobs that match criteria they specifically requested and share the positions with the appropriate members of their organizations. Community partners include:

- Business professionals
- Diversity organizations
- Historically black colleges and universities
- Professional/technical groups
- State workforce agencies
- Universities and colleges
- Veterans groups
- Women’s groups

**Compensation**

Education Minnesota human resources continually monitors our internal compensation for the executive staff (ES), associate executive staff (AES) and office professional staff (OPS). No compensation study was conducted in the past year.

**Benefits**

The HR department provides administration of 13 insurance and welfare plans offered to 150 benefits eligible employees. The HR staff collaborates with representatives from the employee groups of TEMPO, USM, AES, ES and officers, on an insurance Labor Management Committee to secure benefits that take proactive measures against the ever-increasing costs. In the late fall of 2018, the LMC instructed the broker for Education Minnesota to place out for bid the employee life insurance, long-term disability insurance and seek proposals for an employee-paid vision program and pet insurance. The committee reviewed the bids for the life insurance/LTD and implanted a new carrier creating a net savings of $53,000. Beginning January 2019, Education Minnesota began offering employees access to a vision plan and pet insurance as a non-employer funded benefit option to employees.
The employee wellness program operates under the direction of the HR department but is a fully employee-run group. The wellness program operates as a proactive way to foster a safe and healthy work environment with a focus on personal wellness and health care education.

The HR department also administers benefits continuation to separated employees and retirees.

**Risk management**

The HR department has an active role in risk management at Education Minnesota, which involves safety and security as well as regulatory compliance. The HR department conducts audits of our workplaces, develops written policies and implements practices that combined help to mitigate risk in the workplace. In compliance with the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) regulations, Education Minnesota tracks and reports incidents that occur on Education Minnesota property. In 2018, Education Minnesota had three reported workplace incidents, none of which caused lost time or lost wages.

**Regulatory compliance**

The HR department ensures compliance with state and federal employment laws, regulations and guidelines issued by the Department of Labor, Nationals Labor Relations Bureau, Minnesota Human Rights Act, Department of Health and Human Services and the IRS.

**Safety/security**

The safety and security of Education Minnesota’s members and employees is paramount. The HR department works to ensure that each of the Education Minnesota worksites is compliant with strict OSHA guidelines and in compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act.

The HR director also leads an internal staff committee as a guide to the organization in reviewing incidents and making organizational suggestions for the improvement in the safety and security of all Education Minnesota buildings.

During the past year, Education Minnesota has made much-needed, significant enhancements to the internal/external door locks, digital card readers and implemented new video monitoring and a cloud-based security system with real-time alerts at the Education Minnesota headquarters building. The existing system was operating on un-supported software, as the prior company is defunct. Employees receive a photo identification badge that serves as an access key-card to the headquarters building.

In addition, the HR director conducts worksite visits to ensure safety compliance in each of our 16 offices throughout Minnesota.
Facilities

Facilities management strategically plans major capital improvements ensuring the maintenance to Education Minnesota’s buildings. As applicable, necessary updates are made and inspections occur to ensure the safety of our members and employees. All Education Minnesota owned or leased buildings operate in compliance with state and federal regulations. In order to ensure the functionality, safety and long-term sustainability of Education Minnesota properties, we must continually evaluate and maintain the physical assets.

The following is a list of projects completed in FY18:

A major renovation to the parking lot of the Education Minnesota headquarters building was completed. The parking lot needed a complete scrape down. The project also included the replacement of 48 areas of curb or sidewalk. The parking lot resurfacing provided the opportunity to incorporate three major improvements:

1. Re-grading the lot surface allowed us to shape the lot surface to aide in watershed.
2. Creation of a snow-removal dump space in the far northwest corner of the parking lot.
3. The designation of member and visitor only parking at the southern end of the main lot.

On Sept. 17, 2018, at around 6:00 PM, a fire occurred at the Education Minnesota headquarters building on the garden level in a utility room across from the elevator bay. The fire was caused by a defective battery/charging unit for a cordless vacuum used by the facilities maintenance workers. The fire sprinklers extinguished the fire prior to the fire department's arrival. The fire inspectors ruled the cause of the fire was a manufacturer defect in the product.

Education Minnesota has begun a multi-phase landscaping project at the headquarters building. The building must have landscaping and exterior maintenance done in accordance with the zoning and design rules issued by the Capitol Area Architectural Planning Board. The current landscaping has not received a significant update since 1991.

Phase one was the removal of the existing shrubberies, plantings and broken sprinkler lines surrounding the main parking lot area. Installed were new water-conserving drip lines that perform better and conserve water and a mix of hearty planting and new river rock was added as ground cover to provide a more natural look consistent with the Minnesota State Capitol.

Phase two will focus on the front of the building including the east and west sides. The design is an extension of the plantings used in phase one and replaces the existing sprinkler lines with water-conserving drip lines. The retaining wall on the southwest corner will be extended, the existing trees trimmed and up lighting installed for the signage.
Phase three will focus on the area below street view on the front of the building. This area is predominantly visible from inside the building looking out of the garden-level conference room. New plantings will be low maintenance and shade tolerant. The broken sprinkler lines will be replaced with water-conserving drip lines.

The roof on Education Minnesota’s headquarters building is aging and annual maintenance is required. The last time the roof was replaced predates 2000, and we estimate it to be in 1991. In late July, a full inspection of the roof was performed. The headquarters building will need the roof replaced by 2025. The latest round of repairs were performed in mid-October 2018.

The Education Minnesota headquarters building is two buildings conjoined. The original east-end structure, building one, or 41 Sherburne, dates back to 1956. The west end of the building, building two, or 55 Sherburne was an addition built in 1969. The windows in building two are original and many have failing seals. The original windows lack the insulation ratings of modern windows and the rubber seals have begun deteriorating past the point of repair. In the summer, several windows leak rainwater, and in the winter, frost develops on the inside. As a temporary fix for winter, we sealed 18 windows on the inside and outside. The temporary fix was only moderately successful as the past winter has been colder than average.

**Print shop**

Education Minnesota has a full print shop located in the headquarters building. The print shop produces in excess of 500 print products annually for the various departments of Education Minnesota, many locals and several union affiliates. In 2018, an online ordering system was implemented. The online ordering system houses a digital library of documents that will be available for production. Business models have shown that the incorporation of this system will reduce the amount of errors, increase efficiencies and assist with the accounting processing.
Policy, research and outreach department report

Carrie Lucking, director

The Policy, Research and Outreach Department includes the following staff:

Wanda Cone, executive assistant to the director

Organizers:
Sarah Derdoski, organizing specialist
Amy Derwinski, organizing specialist
Bridget Moore, organizing specialist
Shirley Roeber, office assistant
Robin Wonsley, organizing specialist: community engagement
Kimberly Colbert, organizing specialist: racial equity

Foundation:
Dayonna Knutson, foundation director
Sam Jasenosky, office assistant
Vicki Turner, collaboration lab

Negotiations:
Andrea Ceconi, negotiations specialist
Maureen Fourre, office assistant
Mark Schmiesing, negotiations specialist

Education Issues:
Sara Ford, education issues specialist
Justin Killian, education issues specialist
Jonathan Kim, education issues specialist
Allison LaBree, education issues specialist
Elizabeth Petterson, office assistant
Vicki Turner, education issues specialist

To build a more vibrant union—a union to which all members want to belong—we must have multiple tools to engage members at the local and state level. The policy, research and outreach department works to support local member engagement and organizing as well as provide pathways for member engagement in programs related to social justice, professional and traditional unionism.

From professional development to policy analysis, getting a grant to improve classroom practice, to learning a new skill, to partnering to settle a contract, to supporting locals in building member involvement and much more, our job is to ensure that every member—those who are currently involved and those who are yet to see how valuable our union is—can see their values reflected in the work of their union.
The policy, research and outreach department’s main successes in 2018-19 include:

- **Earning a major grant from the NEA Center for Great Public Schools to offer new, ongoing professional development and expand the Early Career Leadership Fellowship program:** With generous support from the NEA, Education Minnesota is expanding our Early Career Leadership Fellowship to an ESP cohort this year. We are also creating new, ongoing professional development opportunities targeted toward early career educators. These courses will be credit-earning and provide high-quality training to support early career teachers in being successful in their classrooms and stay in the profession.

- **Early Career Leadership Fellows:** Teacher Cohort II includes 32 fellows who have engaged 160 early career educators in multiple one-on-one conversations, identified issues and made plans to address the top issue that they identified. Members from last year’s cohort have joined negotiations teams, become building reps and even become coaches for this year’s fellows.

- **Educator Policy Innovation Center (EPIC):** In early February of this year, Education Minnesota members from across the state came together to work on EPIC’s paper on visionary education funding. The paper identifies 10 areas where a chronic lack of funding is undermining our ability to provide the 21st century education that all Minnesota children deserve, regardless of race or ZIP code. The paper’s 10 sections focus on educator compensation, teacher mentoring and induction, school infrastructure, pre-K, trauma-informed, restorative practices, teacher preparation, student support services, full-service community schools, higher education, and special education. EPIC has released seven papers that were driven by 90 member advisors.

- **Minnesota Educator Academy (MEA) professional development:** Education Minnesota’s MEA provides the highest quality, educator-delivered professional development to Minnesota educators. This year, we engaged in curriculum review and revision of most of our courses, updating them to provide the best, most relevant material possible. In addition, we held our first train-the-trainer weekend to certify 38 new trainers who can deliver high-quality professional development to their colleagues. We also trained more than 6,000 members through our recertification course offerings, which are delivered by over 200 trained members throughout the state.

- **MEA Facing Inequities and Racism in Education (FIRE):** Education Minnesota now boasts over 50 trained Racial Equity Advocates who are working within their buildings and regions to engage members in critical equity work. In addition, our FIRE professional development continues to be popular, with over 500 members getting training in introductory level racial equity courses. Thanks to the Mounds View Education Association and NEA, the FIRE program is also piloting an ongoing course on racial equity and cultural competence that we hope to make available to all members next year. Education Minnesota continues to be recognized nationally for our work in anti-racism organizing and professional development.
• **Organizing Leadership Fellowship:** This year, 30 fellows from 26 locals are working throughout the spring to develop organizing plans and engage their colleagues in buildings, issue organizing and moving to membership. Fellows build understanding in organizing tactics, leadership development and capacity within their local.

• **Bargaining:** As members start to see the connection between decisions made by state lawmakers and the resources available at the bargaining table, more and more locals are engaging members in organizing work for visionary education funding. This year’s Collective Bargaining and Organizing Conference (CBOC) highlighted this connection to the 697 participants that attended. In addition, over 60 locals took action within their local community on Bargaining Unity Day, March 13, demanding better schools for the students they educate.

• **Affordable health care for all families:** The Public Employees Insurance Program (PEIP) is the public health insurance option for school district employees. By passing health care transparency legislation, districts now must have an open process and share information about health insurance bids with local unions. Last year alone, we saw a 30 percent increase in the number of local school districts choosing PEIP as the most stable, affordable, quality option for health insurance. Over one-third of Education Minnesota’s locals are now on the public plan, creating pressure for private insurers to bring down health care costs and improve quality.

• **Leadership development:** By engaging members in social justice, professional and traditional unionism; the policy, research and outreach department is developing local leaders. From last year’s ECLF cohort alone, at least eight members have taken on local or state leadership roles. Thirty-one of our EPIC team members have testified at the Legislature, met with the governor or commissioners, or taken a public role on the topic of the paper they worked on. In the past three years, members participating in member of color events or EMAC have stepped up to run for local leadership as well as the governing board of Education Minnesota. We now have the greatest number of members of color on the governing board in Education Minnesota history.

We are here to engage Education Minnesota members in an active, vibrant union that has strong community partnerships. We nurture a culture of organizing and empowerment within Education Minnesota locals and affiliates. While our staff deal with many issues every day, we never lose sight of the fact that Education Minnesota’s strength lies in its members, and it is our job to help members, locals and affiliates find that strength and put it to use for our members.
Below is a more detailed accounting of activities of the policy, research and outreach department this year.

**Engaging members in professional practice – Minnesota Educator Academy**

**MEA member professional development – primary contacts: Allison LaBree**

Education issues staff delivered presentations to members at Summer Seminar, drive-ins, MEA professional development offerings and other events in locals and IO’s. More and more, these sessions focus on training member trainers to deliver classroom professional development.

Education issues staff continue to support Education Minnesota’s extensive network of trainers in the MEA and AFT Professional Development program. Education issues staff monitor changes in the AFT offerings and support locals as they deliver union-developed professional development. A key focus last summer was to conduct a curriculum review of many of our trainings. Ten member trainers with content expertise were gathered to review and rewrite some of our professional development offerings. Specific attention was paid to applying an equity lens to the relicensure courses of English learners, positive behavior interventions, reading and student mental health. Member trainers and staff are currently meeting to develop a new training to meet the cultural competency relicensure requirement. At its upcoming annual trainers’ conference, the member trainer participants will focus on equity literacy.

The relicensure courses continue to be a valuable resource for our members. Our trainers were busy delivering this professional development throughout the state during the summer, fall and winter.

Out trainers were called upon to deliver relicensure courses in meeting the needs of English learners, positive behavior interventions, reading comprehension, student mental health, and suicide prevention. There was also an increase in requests for culturally responsive teaching, trauma-informed and restorative practices and dyslexia. Education issues staff also presented on using data to improve instruction, standards-based instruction and assessment, teacher licensing and technology integration. Other workshops included teacher development and evaluation topics: professional learning, peer review and use of student data for evaluation.

The MEA professional conference featured sessions on trauma-informed instruction, student engagement, instructional practice, student mental health and dyslexia as well as many other aspects of education that affects the lives of our students. Featured speakers addressed crowds in a variety of topics, including cultural responsiveness, American Indian education, student engagement, social media safety and education policy.

More than 6,000 Education Minnesota members have received free recertification credits and classroom professional development CEUs thanks to their union. To build our capacity and continue to meet the needs of educators and elevate the profession of education, we held our first train-the-trainer workshop. All participants who were interested in becoming an MEA PD trainer received training in delivering effective professional development, and then chose two of four other...
offerings to cross-train: English learners, interrupting racism, student mental health and understanding and overcoming bias and white privilege. With 38 new member trainers added to our trainer force of over 200, we are excited about the growth of our professional development programming.

**ProAC – primary contact: Allison LaBree**

ProAC has focused their efforts on thinking through the needs of early career educators. Minnesota’s new tiered licensure system will dramatically impact how prepared educators are when they enter Minnesota classrooms. In response to the goals of the NEA’s Great Public Schools grant, ProAC researched and explored ways in which to better support early career educators in areas of classroom management, building collaborative relationships, instructional support and cultivating work/life balance. They recommended that a survey of early career educator members be conducted to gather data to be used to develop credit-bearing coursework in the areas of highest need.

**Engaging members as policy leaders**

**Educator Policy Innovation Center – primary contacts: Sara Ford and Justin Killian**

EPIC advisory team members participate in intensive policy workshops during which they share research findings and professional experiences in order to build education policy recommendations. They also then serve as advocates for those policy recommendations, testifying, offering interviews and communicating with other Education Minnesota members. All of the papers are available in the advocacy section of the Education Minnesota website.

In early February 2019, Education Minnesota members from across the state came together to work on EPIC’s paper on visionary education funding. The paper identifies 10 areas where a chronic lack of funding is undermining our ability to provide the 21st century education that all Minnesota children deserve, regardless of race or ZIP code. The paper’s 10 sections focus on educator compensation, teacher mentoring and induction, school infrastructure, pre-K, trauma-informed, restorative practices, teacher preparation, student support services, full-service community schools, higher education, and special education. EPIC has released seven papers that were driven by 90 member advisors.

**Support and influence the Minnesota Board of Teaching, now the Public Educator Licensing and Standards Board or PELSB – primary contact: Sara Ford**

Last year the Legislature abolished the Minnesota Board of Teaching and replaced it with the Public Educator Licensing and Standards Board. Corporate education groups are actively working to undermine the credibility and activity of the board. Professional licensing is a critical issue for all members. If you or anyone in your local wants to be involved in these issues, please contact sara.ford@edmn.org.
Engaging members in racial and social justice

MEA FIRE: Facing Inequities and Racism in Education – primary contact: Jonathan Kim

This year has been all about growth of the FIRE program. Last spring, the original Racial Equity Advocate (REA) cohort completed their first year and did some amazing work at the all-staff meeting and at Summer Seminar in August. Many of those same cohort members provided feedback for how to start the next group of REAs, which kicked off in December. We were able to welcome 25 new REAs, and many of those new cohort members have participated in events, including lobby days, train-the-trainer workshops and attending the CBOC.

Not only have the original cohort members helped shape the direction of the REA program, they have also helped refine the current racial equity professional development offerings, and we are excited to be rolling out a new sequence of professional development with the Mounds View Education Association.

Education issues staff work closely with organizers to build internal and external support and local capacity for these learning opportunities. In total, there are more than 50 active FIRE team members who have already actively trained more than 500 members in some level of anti-racism work.

The Ethnic Minority Affairs Committee (EMAC) – primary contact: Kimberly Colbert

The Ethnic Minority Affairs Committee spent the past year organizing around the specific implementation of the Affirmative Involvement Plan (AIP). Committee members combed through the document and identified areas in which they are already working, or wanting to work, or partner. The committee identified at least 15 tactics currently being implemented by EMAC members to actively engage in advocacy for equity and social justice.

Educators of color engagement – primary contact: Kimberly Colbert

This year, a group of 15 diverse members attended the Illinois Education Association Emerging and Minority Leader training. These leaders spent a November weekend participating in workshops and a mock representative assembly (chaired by former NEA President Reg Weaver) exploring and preparing for leadership in Education Minnesota. Each of these educators have gone on to participate in a number of activities, events and programs. They are running for local office and have sought delegate status for the Education Minnesota Representative Convention and the NEA Representative Assembly. They have participated in lobby days for members of color and social justice advocates. They are part of the Racial Equity Advocate and Emerging Leaders cohorts. Members active in the American Indian Education Professionals forum have begun a powwow outreach focused on attracting Indigenous youth to the teaching profession. The first powwow celebration reached at least 75 people. The group plans to table at four more powwows this year.
Local unions educator of color groups – primary contact: Kimberly Colbert

In partnership with local leaders and field staff, organizers have continued to help locals establish member of color affinity groups. We know that involvement at the local level is critically important to members retaining their membership, and this local informal networking supports the important work happening organizing our locals. As the support continues to develop and relationships across organizations grow, members from more established affinity groups have been assisting colleagues in other locals, strengthening the work even further. Minneapolis Federation of Teachers, Education Minnesota-Osseo, Roseville Education Association, Rochester Education Association and Anoka-Hennepin Education Minnesota are leading the way in providing networking and leadership opportunities professional development for members of color. Duluth, St. Paul and Dakota County United Educators joined the previously mentioned locals in engaging in intentional efforts to bring together members of color.

Engaging members and stakeholders in collective bargaining and negotiations

Collective bargaining – primary contacts: Andrea Cecconi and Mark Schmiesing

The negotiations department engages in direct assistance to locals at the bargaining table in a variety of ways including: financial and audit analysis, creating new salary schedule options, working directly on ATPPS/QComp, developing organizing plans around protracted negotiation and offering any other assistance requested. The bulk of this year’s work in the department has been direct assistance to field staff and locals in bargaining and organizing around contracts as part of our Value of Belonging work.

Average salary schedule improvement for 2017-19 teacher contracts was steady throughout and we can report final numbers of 2.18 percent for 2017-18 and 2.33 percent for 2018-19.

An ongoing need in teacher contract negotiations is strengthening unrequested leave of absence language or negotiating it for the first time in locals that have relied on the statutory default. Many more teacher contracts contain provisions that lay out a layoff process than those that do not. We estimate 70-80 contracts needed to add language following the previous round of negotiations.

ESP contract bargaining: At this time, all of our ESP locals with contracts on the “teacher cycle” have negotiated a 2017-19 agreement and most of those with a contract on the even years have settled a 2018-20 agreement. As of this writing, four ESP locals report that they are in active negotiations for a successor agreement to contracts that were up in 2018. There are several new locals that report that they are working toward a first contract. Of locals that have settled a 2017-19 contract, most reported that they are tracking the general trend of teacher settlements.

QComp and TDE – primary contact: Andrea Cecconi

There continues to be an unprecedented waitlist of 24 districts and charter schools for QComp funding at this time due to a failure by the Legislature to
lift the appropriation cap in the past two legislative sessions. Department staff have worked directly with leaders in a dozen locals in the past year on QComp applications as well as a number of others on implementation needs. We continue to work directly with the Minnesota Department of Education and at the Legislature to address funding gaps.

**Negotiations resources and training – primary contacts:**
**Andrea Cecconi and Mark Schmiesing**

Over the past year, negotiations department staff were active in providing training, both core training programs (Certified Negotiator Program for Teachers and ESPs and Health Insurance Basics and Beyond) as well as offerings through the Professional Training for Educators curriculum which includes costing, analyzing insurance, financial analysis and negotiations research among others. Training at Summer Seminar focused heavily on health insurance and organizing to support negotiations.

The biennial Collective Bargaining and Organizing Conference took place on Feb. 1 and 2, 2019. Six hundred ninety-seven participants attended, and at least 38 locals sent new participants. The CBOC provided 55 different sessions training in three strands (Negotiations Fundamentals, Organizing for Power, and Student-Centered Advocacy) over the course of the evening of Friday, Feb. 1 and Saturday Feb. 2. Powerful testimony from Cheryl Allen of Lynd Education Association and Wendy Drugge from Burnsville Education Association about the ways that member and parent organizing are the foundation of our collective bargaining.

The conference provided members with opportunities to build skills in existing and new classes. Racial equity work is a pillar of Education Minnesota’s advocacy and was intentionally built into a number of sessions as a mandate for our focus in bargaining, both in terms of process and outcomes. The most popular classes ranged from Conversational School Finance and Effective Bargaining Team Practices to focus on tiered licensure and post-Janus guidance.

**Health Insurance Basics and Beyond – primary contact: Mark Schmiesing**

As a result of numerous health care issues facing members, staff has developed a core training to help members better navigate this complex issue. This training has four major components:

1. **Group health insurance:** What it is, how it works and the various components and terminology of health insurance.
2. **Legal rights and responsibilities:** Laws that deal with health insurance.
3. **Side by side comparisons:** How to make comparisons between health insurance plans.
4. **An effective insurance committee:** How to utilize your insurance committee to its maximum potential.

The goal of the training is for members to navigate and maximize their health care rights and responsibilities.
The Public Employee Insurance Program (PEIP) Project  
– primary contact: Mark Schmiesing

The current PEIP pool insures more than 40,000 lives and includes locals in 133 school districts/locals. Cities and counties are now pooled with school employees creating greater pooling strength for more public employees. With the Health Insurance Transparency and Accountability process, more districts are seeing the PEIP bids, causing an increase of approximately 30 districts/locals to join PEIP in the past year. The vast majority of these districts received the PEIP bid as a result of HITA and exercised the right to unilaterally go with PEIP due to the PEIP legislation. This demonstrates how these two pieces of legislation work in concert to help members meet their health care needs. On average, the pools of Education Minnesota locals entering PEIP have experienced rate increases averaging 2.4 percent per year for the past 10 years. We continue to educate members about the unique characteristics of PEIP, the excellent renewal success it has experienced and supporting the pooling concept. We also continue to advocate the use of the PEIP legislation as an avenue for locals to exercise their unilateral right to select PEIP.

We will hold member education meetings about the PEIP plan for locals that are considering whether to seek or accept PEIP bids in preparation for the next round of bids.

While the voluntary PEIP pool is not a permanent solution to the health insurance crisis, PEIP has shown promise in providing some rate stability, as well as bringing meaningful competition in the health insurance market. This offers some relief to members whose rates have continued to climb in a relatively closed market, dominated by a few providers.

Affordable Care Act – primary contact: Mark Schmiesing

It is still the law of the land! A work team continues to analyze and provide guidance to locals about the implications of various provisions of the Affordable Care Act. This act will have important implications for some Education Minnesota locals. Our member education efforts on this issue started at the Collective Bargaining Conference in January 2013. We had a major educational effort for all members who attended Summer Seminar in 2014. We are monitoring the potential changes at the federal level and how they may impact our state.

MNsure – primary contact: Mark Schmiesing

MNsure provides coverage for a number of our members, including ESPs, retiree and contingent faculty. We have staff designated as certified application counselors who can assist with MNsure.

Engaging Member Constituencies

ESP regional meetings – primary contact: Sarah Derdoski

Due to steady decline in attendance, the ESP Council of Local Presidents opted not to offer the ESP regional meeting and training series in 2019. Instead, the ESP CLP is designing a series of ESP-only classes for this year’s Summer Seminar.
Melissa Terpstra, a paraprofessional with St. Peter Paraprofessionals Local #7352, was the Education Support Professional of the Year. She was recognized for this honor during ESP day of National Education Week at her worksite and among her colleagues. As the award recipient, she represented Minnesota at the NEA ESP Conference in Las Vegas as a candidate for the national NEA ESP of the Year.

The EdMN ECLF Collaborative began Cohort II this fall. There are 32 fellows from six locals who are working with a local leader coach to engage in a yearlong experience designed to engage early career educators to grow as leaders, provide them skills and resources to engage other early career educators and identify and plan for a change, and activate them to become formal and informal leaders in their local, state and national unions. The ECLF Collaborative is grounded in the Teacher Leadership Institute competencies, with a focus on overarching, instructional, policy and association leadership.

All EdMN ECLF programs have held monthly local meetings facilitated by an ECLF coach based on the ECLF curriculum, developed a sounding board in which each fellow identifies an organizing group of at least five other early career educators to engage in one-to-one conversation throughout the year with an emphasis on comprehensive unionism, and the local team develops a Leadership Engagement and Action Plan to seek a desired change identified as a priority by early career educators in Sounding Board conversations.

Through their conversations with over 160 other early career educators in their local, the Cohort II fellows have identified need for increased support in the areas of professional development, representation in negotiations and mentorship. They will continue to work with local leaders and district officials to develop their LEAP. Cohort II will convene for a statewide meeting this spring to review and gather feedback from one another before finalizing their plan.

The fellows from Cohort I have continued to stay active in their union. They have taken on leadership roles such as membership chair, negotiations and one is even a coach for Cohort II. Others have led their local in improving engagement of early career members and delivering professional development.

We are also in the process of adapting the ECLF curriculum in order to expand the fellowship to include ESPs. Like the early career fellowship, ESP locals would engage in a yearlong experience designed to foster leadership growth, improve skills, and activate them to become formal and informal leaders in their local, state and national unions.

Building strong local unions

Tackling the post-Janus world of voluntary unionism – primary contacts: Kimberly Colbert, Sarah Derdoski, Amy Derwinski, Bridget Moore, Robin Wonsley

We know the challenges of voluntary unionism are ongoing. Education Minnesota’s locals did an incredible job this year, retaining over 99 percent of
existing members. However, locals have been asking for more support in recruiting new educators to the union. This need, coupled with the historical experience of other states who have experienced the shift to voluntary unionism and experienced a more dramatic decline in membership in years two and three, compelled the governing board to make internal organizing within our locals a priority.

Given this priority, Education Minnesota will be providing greater organizing support directly to locals by shifting the work of the organizers from external organizing of new locals and state program work to internal organizing support for our existing locals. Organizers will work closely with local leaders in assigned geographic areas to build local capacity, engage existing members, recruit new members and identify issues to work on as a local.

**New locals organized – primary contacts: Bridget Moore, Amy Derwinski and Sarah Derdoski**

Since last year’s representative convention, Education Minnesota has added new local unions.

- Rochester Professional Association: A unit of 700 paraprofessionals voted to transfer exclusive representation to Education Minnesota.

- Shakopee Health Assistants: A unit of nine health assistants voted to join the Shakopee Education Association as another chapter within the local.

- Dakota County Cultural Family Advocates: A unit of 15 Cultural Family Advocates in ISD 196.

- Eden Prairie Preschool Teachers: A unit of 30 preschool and pre-K teachers who voted unanimously to become a second bargaining unit under the Eden Prairie Education Association

- Elk River School Readiness Teachers: A unit of 15 school readiness teachers who voted to become a second bargaining unit and members of the Elk River Education Association.

**Supporting strong local unions**

The organizers have assisted with several settlement assessment meetings throughout the state for locals seeking crisis fund dollars. These meetings support greater member and community engagement as locals organize around bargaining and local issues.

We are also working with locals who are or have experienced difficult circumstances either in bargaining or other internal conflicts to improve their organizational capacity. Often external threats provide an opportunity for greater unity and engagement.

**Degrees, Not Debt – primary contact: Bridget Moore**

The Degrees, Not Debt program has now trained over 5,000 members across the state around student debt and the information that borrowers need to know to make sounds decisions for themselves and their families. Degrees, Not Debt
provides an opportunity to members, particularly young members, to find value in their union beyond traditional means. The initial draw continues to be the information we provide about existing loan forgiveness programs for which they might qualify and encourage them to take initial steps toward applying for them. The follow-up piece for us is to encourage members to advocate on behalf of themselves and others for needed change in state-level legislation.

This fall, two door knocks were organized with candidates who were particularly supportive of this work. Our goal was to help them win and keep our legislative priorities at the top of mind after they were elected. One of the two targeted candidates won, and Zack Stephenson (36A) out of Coon Rapids, and he immediately reached out to author the Student Borrower Bill of Rights (HF1424/SF1484). We have had six members testify through three hearings, sharing compelling stories about misleading and confusing information provided by their loan servicers. The bill has made it through without contention so far. The Borrower Bill of Rights aims to provide three main components:

- Provides a consumer advocate for borrowers within state government empowered to take on abuses in the student loan industry.
- Helps borrowers understand their rights and resolve complaints related to higher education institutions and student loan servicers.
- Requires loan servicers to be licensed and puts in place other standards they must follow; cutting through the red tape where so many borrowers get stuck and give up.

Our lobby day included 21 educators from around the state who came to speak to the importance of this bill. A press conference was held in the morning where three members spoke to the critical nature of this bill, joined by Rep. Stephenson and Sen. Melisa Franzen. As the day progressed, and through the lobbying efforts of members, we gained three additional house authors and one senate co-sponsor. We have seen this type of legislation come up in other states, but it has not previously been by an education union. Fortunately, our work gained the attention of two national groups, the Student Borrower Protection Center and Consumers for Responsible Lending, who have been incredibly helpful in providing a national context and helping with nuanced language.

We continue to work in collaboration with NEA, AFT and Higher Ed Not Debt, a coalition of more than 100 organizations, who are all are working on education debt in some capacity. Through this, we can track federal legislation and threats in addition to activity and action in other states.

Outside of the training and legislative activities, we have encouraged members to get involved in this topic in a variety of ways. We have had several districts do informal polling of how much student debt is in their districts. The numbers are staggering. We have also held “Drown Your Debt” events, which opens up this topic to both members and the broader community. We know this is an area that affects over 775,000 Minnesotans with $27.1 billion in student loan debt. We continue to work with other unions, particularly MAPE and Teamsters, who have done joint trainings and events together. This is a topic many feel passionate about and they are grateful their union is providing opportunities to address this crisis.
It provides an excellent opportunity to connect to members about something they care about and an avenue for involvement.

**Coalition work – primary contacts: Robin Wonsley and Kimberly Colbert**

Education Minnesota has played a major role in The Coalition to Increase Teachers of Color and American Indian Teachers (TOCAIT). The coalition, made up of several classroom and higher education educators and community partners, has worked with Rep. and member Mary Kunesh Podein and Sen. Patricia Torres Ray, to introduce the House and Senate versions of the Increase Teachers of Color Act (ITCA). This bill, which has a record number of signers from both sides of the aisle, seeks to increase the number of teachers of color from 4 to 8 percent by 2020. Coalition partners include Minnesota Education Equity Partnership (MnEEP), Metro State University, Hopkins Public Schools, Roseville Area Schools, St. Paul Public Schools, University of St. Thomas, Minnesota state ethnic councils and others.

Education Minnesota is also a founding member of the Equity Coalition. For the past two years, the coalition worked together to develop an aspirational agenda supporting free college, universal pre-K, and full-service community schools. The coalition also developed a campaign plan to earn victories on these three priorities.

Education Minnesota also has a presence in both the People of Color Union Members (POCUM), organized by the Minneapolis Regional Labor Federation, and the newly established Asian Pacific American Labor Alliance (APALA Minnesota), which operates under the AFL-CIO. These coalitions serve to unite union members of color in solidarity to address labor issues in Minnesota. Additionally, Education Minnesota’s Equity Coalition has also joined two national community-labor tables, Alliance to Reclaim Our Schools (AROS) and Journeys for Justice (J4J), which are providing technical assistance to the coalition to help advance their campaign priorities.

**Full-service community schools (FSCS) campaign – primary contact: Robin Wonsley**

Launched in 2013, Education Minnesota members and community partners are working together to expand the full-service community schools model at the state and local level. Full-service community schools (FSCS) focus on academics, health and social services, youth and community development and community engagement. They bring the community into the school and integrate them into the fabric of everything that happens. Schools become the community center, the clinic, the connection to critical social services and much more, depending on the needs of the families that school serves.

In 2015, Education Minnesota successfully lobbied the Legislature for $500,000 to expand full-service community schools. This funding was expanded in 2016 due to efforts of members of Education Minnesota. This allowed districts like Deer River to begin the process of transforming King Elementary into a full-service community school, Rochester to expand its number of community schools, and continued great work in places like Duluth, Minneapolis and Brooklyn Center.
In 2017, no additional funding was allocated toward full-service community schools from the state. However, the equity coalition launched a full-service community school campaign in Minneapolis in fall 2018. As a result of this campaign, and partnerships with MFT, the City of Minneapolis Department of Parks and Recreation, and Minneapolis Public Schools, the coalition was able to win an investment of $2.5 million into FSCS expansion efforts in Minneapolis, and two new FSCS’s will be launched in the fall.

Furthermore, the coalition and Education Minnesota are working together to advance our $4 million FSCS funding bill at the Capitol.

**Building and strengthening community partnerships – primary contact: Robin Wonsley**

Education Minnesota continues to nurture and grow relationships with statewide community partners in support of educators, students and strong public schools. Partnerships have included efforts to build stronger relationships between parents and teachers, promote racial equity in education, effectively implement their 2018-20 Minnesota Miracle 2.0 campaign, promote justice for immigrant students and their families, promote high-quality public preschool, and increase the economic security of families.

**Community engagement assistance for local unions – primary Contact: Robin Wonsley**

Organizers helped local unions seeking to develop or continue their own local community engagement programs by request. Organizers will also offer member organizer trainings at Summer Seminar that will include a section on community engagement, and how locals can strengthen relationships with members through cultivating and leveraging existing and/or new community partnerships. Assistance and training are available by request from the policy, research and outreach department on an ongoing basis.

**Member and community trainings on corporate education reform – primary contact: Robin Wonsley**

Education Minnesota continues to research and monitor attempts by private interests to weaken public education at the state and local levels. In recent years, large corporations and foundations have backed lobbying, public relations and community engagement strategies in support of market-based education reforms targeting pre-K, K-12 and higher education systems. These reforms threaten to move students out of public schools, siphon funding and put public dollars in the hands of corporate profiteers. Education Minnesota trained members, local unions and community organizations to recognize and respond to the threats posed by groups pushing market-based education reforms. Training is available by request from the policy, research and outreach department on an ongoing basis.
Public affairs department report

Brandon Rettke, director

The public affairs department includes the following staff:

Nat Anderson-Lippert, grassroots advocacy organizer
Ramona Bias, public affairs office assistant
Ashley Behrens, public affairs office assistant
Megan Boldt, public affairs specialist
Anna Brelje, political action coordinator
Jodee Buhr, lobbyist
Wanda Cone, executive assistant to the director
Sarah Cooke, digital content coordinator
Doug Dooher, public affairs specialist
Londel French, grassroots advocacy organizer
Shirliana Glassberg, web/graphic design assistant
Kris Klein, grassroots advocacy organizer
Jim Meyer, political organizing specialist
Kathi Micheletti, lobbyist
Sara Schumacher, public affairs office assistant
Kieren Steinhoff, public affairs specialist
Brit Werner, public affairs office assistant
Eric Widi, art director
Chris Williams, press secretary
Paul Winkelaar, membership mobilization specialist
2018 legislative session

With the state budget passed in 2017, and the partisan split between Governor Dayton and the legislature, there was no real incentive for major action to take place in the Capitol in 2018.

The Republican-controlled Legislature adjourned May 20, passing funding and tax cut bills that Gov. Mark Dayton vetoed four days later.

The supplemental spending bill included just $35.5 million for education, but the small amount of money wasn’t worth the bad policy changes like a school rating system that would have come with it.

Republican leaders offered a small amount of one-time funding to helps schools, but they took it from reserves and staff development and community ed accounts. Included in the proposals was a tax bill that included corporate tax cuts.

In a major victory, the Legislature overwhelmingly approved a bill that maintained defined-benefit pension plans for current and future generations without putting undue financial burden on educators, retirees and taxpayers. The changes included:

• Increasing in the employer contribution from 7.5 percent to 8.75 percent phased in over six years. State funding is included to cover this cost.

• Increasing employee contribution from 7.5 percent to 7.75 percent starting July 1, 2022.

• Reducing the cost-of-living adjustment for retirees from 2 percent to 1 percent for the next five years, then a 0.1 percent increase each year until it reaches 1.5 percent in 2028.

Another win was the ratification of contracts for state employees, including Minnesota State College Faculty.

Education Minnesota also fought off several bills that would have hurt public education. These legislative changes included:

• Amending the state Constitution to dedicate certain sales tax revenue to transportation projects. It did not increase the tax rate, which would have meant less state funding would be available for public schools, nursing homes and health care.

• Requiring school districts to create and enforce policies requiring “academic balance” in their educators’ instruction. This would have inhibited good teaching and critical thinking by prohibiting educators from encouraging students to attempt, defend or see the merit in a viewpoint different from their own.

High levels of educator engagement helped make the pension win a reality and also helped defeat many bad policy provisions. About 4,400 emails were sent during the session and 471 educators from 99 locals attended 50 lobby days.
2018 campaign

Education Minnesota took a highly ambitious approach to the 2018 campaign including a year-long strategic plan with our Political Action Committee (PAC) that resulted in the following:

Goals:

1. Elect a pro-public education governor
2. Build member grassroots political power

Values:

• Strategic and well-timed
• Inclusive and relational
• Transparent
• Democratic (participatory)
• Something different

The PAC also created a new endorsement process for the gubernatorial race. Nine gubernatorial candidates began seeking our endorsement in November, committing to five activities required for endorsement. They were:

1. Participate in a public candidate forum at the Education Minnesota political conference.
2. Spend a full- or half-day shadowing educators at work.
3. Engage in a pocketbook and community issues roundtable conversation with educators.
4. Complete a candidate questionnaire that will be shared publicly.
5. Participate in a screening interview with the Education Minnesota PAC board.

Additionally, PAC members each committed to completing 10 one-on-one listening conversations with members before conducting candidate screenings. After candidates completed the process, the PAC voted to endorse Tim Walz for governor.
**Strategies to win in 2018**

**Strategy #1**

Influence general public voters through our PAC contributions and mobilizing member political power with the public.

We accomplished this goal in two main areas.

The first was contributing to strategic allies that were doing voter contact work in support of our endorsed candidates. Those included contributions to:

- **DFL coordinated campaign** – Focused on turning out base voters within the DFL coalition for Tim Walz.
- **Alliance for a Better Minnesota** – Created earned and paid media content in support of Tim Walz and running ads to support his campaign.
- **MN House DFL** – Focused on mail, digital and canvass programs to voters in key legislative districts crucial to the flipping of House control to a pro-public education majority.
- **ALCs/RLFs** – Help fund local AFL-CIO efforts to engage labor households in voting.

Second, we dedicated several days of action throughout the campaign where we recruited and directed members to participate in candidate activities. Along with our ubiquitous “Educators for Walz” T-Shirts at almost every campaign event, educator presence in campaign activities across the state turning out the vote was noticed and recognized.

**Strategy #2**

Opinion research on rapid changes and big divides in Minnesota. Education Minnesota, along with several other labor and non-profit partners, led a long-term message research and framing around creating a race-class narrative with the intention of creating messages that could motivate voters across age, race, religion, gender and region. The outcome of that research was shared with campaigns and was branded in its own campaign #GreaterThanFear which did voter contact through traditional field canvassing and digital advertising. Successful campaigns used this research in creating their own messages.

**Strategy #3**

Run an effective and efficient traditional member education about endorsement and voting to Education Minnesota members who are high information and high propensity voters. We accomplished this by refining our universes and researching best practices on mail and phones to provide the most effective communications.
This included:

- Turnout and persuasion mailings, including legislative mail:
  - “Gerbergram” side-by-side.
  - Leader letters.
  - Sample ballot.
  - State House candidate endorsement mail.
  - Turnout mailing.

- Persuasion and turnout phone calls.

- Doorknocking through AFL-CIO.

**Strategy #4**

Educator-led, relational political organizing targeting our disengaged activists and dropoff voters.

Our voter research led us to discover 33,000 new and dropoff voters statewide with a concentration of those voters at 1,082 worksites in 239 locals across Minnesota.

We created the Worksite Action Leader (WAL) program to recruit and train a WAL in all of our targeted worksites to run get-out-the-vote programs in the targeted worksites with at least 10 or more new or dropoff voters.

WALs were asked to do four things during the campaign:

1. During back-to-school, send personalized messages to the voters and activists at their worksite.

2. Before Sep. 21, have a conversation about real things in members’ lives and what we want to win through the election.

3. Organize two worksite activities to collectively vote and be active in grassroots activities.
   a. Voting early.
   b. Fun, social, collegial!
   c. Collective accountability about voting and political action.

4. Get-out-the-vote!
By Election Day we had:

- 2,067 members committed to getting-out-the-vote at work!
- 1,559 trained worksite action leaders at 1,051 buildings.
- 19,912 members who skipped voting in 2014 were covered by a trained leader.

We also expanded our digital organizing for the campaign. This includes the creation of the hashtag #edmnvotes, the edmvotes.org site dedicated to campaign material and content and approximately 50 digital engagement leaders pushing weekly content and member-to-member GOTV through social media and the Hustle texting app.

We achieved our first goal with the election of Tim Walz as governor. With the large increase in member activists, the broad recognition from candidates and the media of the increased power of Education Minnesota, we also achieved the second goal of the campaign.

The remainder of 2019 will focus on deep dive analysis of 2018, helping locals with levy and school board elections and planning for the 2020 elections.

**2019 Education Minnesota legislative agenda and positions**

The Legislative Action Committee reviewed the legislative agenda for the 2019 session and updated Education Minnesota’s legislative positions for the Governing Board’s approval.

Education Minnesota’s 2019 legislative agenda includes:

- Fully funding public education, which includes fully funding special education, hiring more support staff for our schools, lowering class sizes, expanding access to full-service community schools, creating an equitable funding stream for the 2011 Teacher Development and Evaluation law, lowering education debt for educators and creating mentoring, induction and retention incentives to attract people of color to teaching and keep them in the profession.

- Improving living and working conditions for our education support professionals by requiring schools to pay them a living wage, helping them get high-quality, affordable health care, and requiring schools to offer paid training for paraprofessionals who work with students.

- Maintaining Minnesota’s high standards for teaching by fixing the state’s tiered licensure system and requiring anyone teaching in pre-K, school readiness or any other early childhood program in a public school to have a teacher’s license.

- Protecting workplace freedoms by expanding the scope of bargaining subjects for teachers and education support professionals, permitting Tier 1 teachers to join the teacher bargaining unit and deleting the exclusion of ECFE and ABE teachers from coverage under the continuing contract and tenure rights laws.
The Education Minnesota 2019 Legislative Positions were updated to reduce redundancies, and revise positions based on changes to the law and emphasize the importance of trauma-informed, restorative practices in our schools; the need for more support staff like ESPs, school counselors, nurses, social workers, psychologists, etc.; the importance of maintaining high standards for licensing all of our teachers in public schools.

2018 referendums

Since 2015, Education Minnesota has stepped up its game in supporting locals, school districts and Vote Yes committees. Prior to 2015, we provided financial resources, lists, design and printing. Currently, staff work with locals and Vote Yes committees to help build campaign plans and strategies, create targeted lists through the VAN, provide cellphones and computers for phoning (we have 150 laptops and more than 250 cellphones for local use), write scripts, create and design mail pieces and many other services that locals and Vote Yes committees would not have access to otherwise.

The extra resources and services have resulted in a significant increase in referendum victories. In 2018, Education Minnesota assisted locals and Vote Yes committees in 31 referendum elections and successfully passed questions in 25. The following locals took advantage of resources from Education Minnesota:

- Tri-City United, Worthington
- Pierz, Grand Rapids, Brainerd
- Sauk Rapids-Rice
- West St Paul-Mendota Heights-Eagan
- Windom
- Albert Lea
- Kingsland
- Milaca
- Cleveland
- Centennial
- Columbia Heights
- Duluth
- Red Wing
- Mahtomedi
- Forest Lake
- Robbinsdale
- Southland
- Dassell-Cokato
- Winona
- Frazee-Vergas
- Rush City
- Waterville-Elysian
- Morristown
- Janesville-Waldorf-Pendleton
- Clearbrook-Gonvick
- Barnesville
- Waconia
- Northfield
- Triton

If your local has a referendum coming up, please contact Jim Meyer, political organizing specialist, at jim.meyer@edmn.org or 800-652-9073 ext. 4813.
2018 school board elections

Education Minnesota supported successful school board campaigns across the state, including campaigns in Anoka-Hennepin, Burnsville, North St Paul-Maplewood-Oakdale, St. Francis, St Paul and Prior Lake-Savage.

Congressional Action Teams

2018 was a very slow year for the Education Minnesota Congressional Action Teams. Because Congress is not very active legislating in an election year, Education Minnesota chose to spend its time in 2018 working on state and federal campaigns to elect education-friendly candidates.

Federal PAC fundraising

The Education Minnesota federal PAC fundraising program, Turn up the Heat, continued to grow in 2018.

For the AFT COPE PAC, the following locals were responsible for raising $186,281 in 2018:

- Dakota County United Educators
- Duluth Federation of Teachers
- Education Minnesota-Grand Rapids
- Education Minnesota Lakeville
- Education Minnesota-Osseo
- Minneapolis Federation of Teachers and Education Assistants
- Education Minnesota-Mora
- Robbinsdale Federation of Teachers
- South St. Paul Teachers’ Association
- St. Paul Federation of Educators

For the NEA Fund for Children and Public Education, we raised $53,035 with the following locals raising $28,555 via payroll deduction in 2018:

- Education Minnesota-Alexandria
- Education Minnesota Brainerd
- Burnsville Education Association
- Caledonia Education Association
- Centennial Education Association
- Chaska Education Association
- Education Minnesota-Detroit Lakes
- Dover-Eyota Education Association
- Eden Prairie Education Association
- Farmington Education Association
- Education Minnesota-Hastings
- Education Minnesota-Kingsland
- Education Moorhead
- Mounds View Education Association
- Education Minnesota-Park Rapids
- Education Minnesota Plainview-Elgin-Millville
- Education Richfield
- Rochester Education Association
- Education Minnesota-Roseville
- St. Cloud Education Association
- St. Croix Education Association
- Staples/Motley Education Association
- Stewartville United Educators
- Winona Education Association
Locals interested in starting a federal PAC fundraising program are asked to contact Jim Meyer, political organizing specialist in the Education Minnesota Public Affairs Department, at 800-652-9073 ext. 4813 or jim.meyer@edmn.org.

Member communications

This past year brought a lot of change to Education Minnesota’s member communications, in response to the ever-changing ways people consume information.

Our traditional print materials continued to support the union’s activities, including training materials, campaign/lobbying materials and materials to support the MEA conference and the Representative Convention.

Education Minnesota’s official publication, the Minnesota Educator, changed in August 2018 from a monthly newspaper to a bimonthly magazine. The print edition of the Minnesota Educator continues to be distributed to all members, and the online version is available on Education Minnesota’s website.

Education Minnesota continues to increase the ways we communicate with members through email. E-newsletters include the semi-weekly Presidents Insider, the weekly Capitol Connection during the legislative session and the monthly News for Educators, Negotiations News, Social Justice News and PD News. E-newsletters are also utilized to share news with those interested in attending events or sharing a specific message, such as the MEA conference, RC and during the election.

Video messages are also an increasing component of Education Minnesota’s member communication. Videos on campaign issues during Election 2018, our legislative campaign, MEA conference highlights, member award winners and more are produced by Education Minnesota staff and shared on our YouTube channel, Facebook page, e-newsletters and other social media channels.

Facebook Live videos have also been a new way for Education Minnesota to allow members to take part in events and meetings, like our gubernatorial endorsement roundtables and the press conferences. The videos are broadcast live, but stay available on our Facebook page.

Website

Education Minnesota’s website continues to be a valuable resource for both our members and the public. Information on everything from our Power of We campaign to the Legislature and big events like the MEA conference is prominent and easy to find. The Member Portal also contains a variety of great resources for local leaders. This coming year, we’re exploring a redesign of the website and reorganization of member resources to emphasize the value of belonging.
**Social media**

Education Minnesota continued to expand our reach and organizing efforts on social media in the past year. We have significantly grown our presence on Instagram, and our Twitter page continues to do very well. We now have more than 23,000 followers on Twitter – much more than many other state affiliates and opposition groups. Our Facebook page is now followed by more than 14,000 people—a 27 percent jump in the past 12 months. Pinterest continues to be another bright spot for us on social media, and our Flickr account features more than 5,000 photos from local and state events. We use YouTube to house our current TV ads and videos for staff from Executive Director Sara Gjerdrum.

**Policy Action Center**

Education Minnesota continues to use our Policy Action Center website (www.educationminnesota.org/policyactioncenter) to engage members and take action on legislative issues. The site features information about legislative priorities, bills we’re watching and even big votes we’re monitoring at the Capitol. Visitors can also find their legislators and sign up for action alerts.

**Mobile app**

This fall, Education Minnesota launched a free mobile app for all iOS and Android devices – including tablets. This new tool brings our union into the 21st century as a way for members to stay informed and connect with their union like never before. App features include: Up-to-date union news and events, a digital membership card with scannable QR code, digital versions of the Minnesota Educator and much more.

**Paid advertising campaign**

In 2018-19, Education Minnesota continued our paid media efforts with a new phase called “Believe in ‘We.’”

Public affairs staff worked with its advertising agency, Flint Group, Education Minnesota leadership and members to research and develop new kinds of advertising to respond to a changing market. A mix of media, including TV, online and social media, has proved to be efficient and successful – with an ever-growing emphasis on social media channels to reach our audiences. While our primary audience continues to be parents with school-aged children, there is also a need to engage younger members and communities of color, as well as potential voters throughout Minnesota.

As indicated above, we are adjusting the emphasis of the media campaign to reflect more online presence and less TV. The rationale for this adjustment involves efficiency, flexibility and affordability—online advertising allows us to target our audience better (down to the ZIP code if necessary) and allows us to adjust as we go, changing targets and using the most effective ads for each audience.
The specifics of our online strategy include:

• Banner ads purchased on 100 top websites.

• Pre-roll video (video advertising that runs before actual online videos).
  • YouTube, Hulu, nbc.com (Adults 35-49 are largest consumers of online video).

• Use of social media to expand the campaign “brand” (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Snapchat and audio services such as Spotify).

With 2019 being a funding year the Legislature, we will again utilize the far reach of television to make a significant impact on legislative decisions. In April, we launched a new set of ads featuring members outlining the urgent need for transformational funding.

One of the core purposes of the “Believe in ‘We’” campaign is to emphasize how our members and the Minnesota public share the same values for our students—fairness, freedom, opportunity, equity, inclusiveness, excellence—and that we must all speak up for these values. “Believe in ‘We’” also will help us express the value of belonging to Education Minnesota and the power we have when we speak with a united voice.

The campaign calls on everyone—educators, students, parents, employers, school administrators and board members—to speak up for the one place that welcomes, embraces and helps all students find their voice: public schools.

Also in 2018, the public affairs department continued a “subsidy” program whereby Education Minnesota pays $400 per local, per year, toward the cost of community outreach activities, including ads, flyers, billboard messages and other promotional materials. To date, more than 240 locals have taken advantage of the subsidy program.

Continued in 2018-19 were sponsorships of Twin Cities Public Television’s “Almanac” program and the Minnesota State High School League, resulting in additional exposure of the Education Minnesota brand to key audiences. Also continued was a sponsorship of KMOJ Radio in Minneapolis, part of an ongoing effort to reach out to communities of color in Minnesota.

Local crisis/bargaining assistance

Working with field staff and local leaders, the public affairs department has provided ongoing assistance to more than 70 locals during bargaining and for general communications assistance. Department staff assisted locals by crafting messages, helping organize rallies and other events, writing press releases, preparing members for media interviews, and drafting flyers, ads and letters to the editor.
2018 MEA conference

The Minnesota Educator Academy (MEA) conference was one day only – Thursday, Oct. 18 – and just open to Education Minnesota members and college students working to become teachers.

The exhibit hall also was smaller, allowing attendees and exhibitors to have a more intimate experience.

The new format allowed Education Minnesota to still offer almost as many classes and make sure the people paying for the conference – our members – were able to get into the classes they wanted. The changes also saved about $50,000.

The conference, which took place in downtown St. Paul at The Saint Paul RiverCentre, was still the largest professional development opportunity for educators in Minnesota. It featured a lineup of 80 workshops and free child care was provided.

Featured speakers included Jitu Brown, the national director for Journey for Justice, who kicked off the day sharing how to use community organizing to fight against the privatization of schools. Minnesota Teacher of the Year Kelly Holstine talked about how educators can take care of their own mental health to have a more positive impact on students. Erin Walsh, who runs Minneapolis-based Mind Positive Parenting, explored social media and its effects on adolescents. And a panel of educators discussed how to use restorative practices to transform school climates.

2018 news media relations

Education Minnesota actively works to promote the reputation, image and policy recommendations of educators through outreach in the news media. The views of the union president on state education policy are widely sought by media throughout the state. President Denise Specht shares those views through interviews on television, radio, podcasts and newspapers. Education Minnesota also provides local leaders and governing board members with training in the most effective ways of communicating with the public. In 2018, the communications staff updated its communication training around contract bargaining with the latest messaging guidance from the AFT, NEA, AFL-CIO and other sources. The state union also provides regular “talking points” on education issues and offers public relations counsel for members in crisis and locals in contract disputes.
2018 Minnesota State Fair booth

Getting a free photo calendar at the Education Minnesota booth at the State Fair is an annual tradition for tens of thousands of Minnesotans. That popularity was on display again in 2018. Education Minnesota was able to produce high-quality, full-color personal calendars every 28 seconds, a number that may be surpassed in 2019 with planned upgrades to the hardware and software. By the end of the fair, our volunteers made more than 14,000 calendars. Because multiple people are typically in each calendar, Education Minnesota estimates the booth produced about 32,000 positive interactions with the public. This was the fifth year of a campaign to gather personal stories about educators from fairgoers. Education Minnesota volunteers asked people to write on notepads printed with the #ThankAnEducator hashtag, a reference to the National Education Association’s Teacher Appreciation Day in May. At the fair’s end, more than 3,500 people wrote a note to an educator who had touched their lives.

The outreach opportunities at the fair included our popular subject area groups, which introduced their areas of expertise though musical instruments, trivia games, tests of math skills and other interactive activities.

The State Fair booth is a major undertaking and would not be possible without the dedication and hard work of more than 200 member volunteers, who hand out literature, take photos and serve as Education Minnesota ambassadors to fairgoers.

Minnesota Teacher of the Year

Education Minnesota hosted the 54th annual Teacher of the Year program in May 2018, resulting in the selection of Kelly D. Holstine from Shakopee. The call for nominations for the 2019 program produced nearly 500 nominations and resulted in 168 candidate applications, the highest number of candidates in 37 years. The Teacher of the Year program continues to highlight great teaching and teachers and results in numerous positive news stories and public appearances throughout the year.