

Preparing for Tough Questions

One of the best ways to respond to tough questions is to use the AAR method:

- Affirm: Let them know you are listening, that you understand, and that their feelings are valid. This shows respect.
- Answer: Give a truthful, concise answer to the questions (give information)
- Redirect: Bring the conversation back to your message (build our power)

For example:

- Dues are expensive and I have student loan payments.
 - *We understand it is difficult. Financial decisions are some of the most urgent and stressful in our hectic lives (affirm).*
 - *The return on your investment outweighs what you pay in dues. Workers in unions earn 13% more than similar workers without unions - and they are more likely to have employer-provided health and retirement plans (answer).*
 - *The value of membership goes far beyond better wages and benefits. Our collective power allows us to fight for better working conditions and the things our students need. A powerful union means more and better jobs, higher wages and benefits and voice in decisions that matter (redirect).*

10-Minute Meetings

Many of our student teachers are stepping into the classroom for the first time and are looking to their mentors and cooperating teachers for tips, advice and guidance. The union can, and should, play a big role in fostering that relationship from the moment student teaching begins.

Here is a list of 10-minute meeting ideas your local can use for monthly meetings to engage your student teachers and new hires.

- Collegial Relationships
- Conference Tips
- Code of Ethics
- Education Debt
- Connecting With Parents
- Comprehensive Unionism
- Keeping Student Data Private
- Using School Technology
- Positive Boundaries

Information handouts and lesson plans for these 10-minute meetings can be found at www.educationminnesota.org/members-only/member-engagement/Resources/new-hire-engagement.

Connecting with Aspiring Educators

Finding ways to engage and support the student teachers in your building



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EDUCATION MINNESOTA
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ASPIRING EDUCATORS

Aspiring Educators are the Future of our Profession and Union

As a local leader, you know the importance of connecting and engaging with your members on a regular basis. It is equally important to connect with the student teachers who are in your classroom; after all, these educators will soon be your colleagues and union brothers and sisters. We want to work together to ensure these student teachers stay in the profession and look to their future union as a source of support and guidance.

More than half—52.5 percent—of teachers holding an active teaching license are not currently teaching in a Minnesota public school, and the number of teachers leaving the profession has increased 57 percent since 2009. Further, 33 percent of teachers leave within their first five years, and many cite a lack of support as being one of the primary reasons they leave. Because of these figures, this resource offers tips and tools to connect with and encourage your student teachers to be lifelong members of the education community.



Comprehensive Unionism

What is comprehensive unionism? Comprehensive Unionism includes three frames of thinking. Each of these frames can help us achieve our collective goal—improve educator working conditions that support a high-quality learning environment where all students can succeed and communities can thrive.

- Traditional unionism is where our collective power is used to meet the bread and butter needs of our members (such as salary and health insurance) and to ensure fairness from management (to allow members to advocate for their students and profession without fear of reprisal).
- Professional unionism is where we use our collective voice to improve the practice of classroom teachers and other education professionals.
- Social justice unionism is where we use our collective voice to advocate for equity to help all students succeed; we accomplish this through active engagement in the community.

Introduce all three frames to your aspiring educators, and help them find the path to union engagement that best fits their interests and needs.

One-to-One Conversations & Conversation Starters

An effective 1:1 conversation will inform you about what is important to your pre-service teacher in your classroom/building. The aim of the 1:1 conversation is to initiate a professional relationship with an aspiring educator and to show the value of belonging to the local union. These conversations are intentional, meant to build trust and to identify values, interests, and motivation. The conversations are ongoing and should create strong bonds, increase strength in the profession/union, and are open ended. Active listening is key to the 1:1 conversation. To get you started here are some conversation starters.

1. What makes you excited about a career in teaching?
2. What makes you scared about a career in teaching?
3. Do you know where to go for professional support when you need it?
4. What made you decide to be a teacher?
5. What would you like to learn/experience this year?

EFFECTIVE RELATIONAL CONVERSATIONS

