

## Education Minnesota

# Education Minnesota responds to latest attempt to silence teachers

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ST. PAUL, Minn. Jan. 9, 2017 – The plaintiffs in a lawsuit challenging the due process protections for Minnesota teachers filed on Monday an appeal to the dismissal of their claims by a Ramsey County District Court judge last year. Although Education Minnesota is not named in the lawsuit, *Forslund v. State of Minnesota*, the president of the union of 86,000 Minnesota educators released the following statement.

“Due process protections are earned by Minnesota teachers after they have passed a lengthy probationary period and have met certain performance expectations,” Denise Specht said. “These laws don’t prevent bad teachers from getting fired, they prevent good teachers from being fired for bad reasons. Tenure laws protect teachers who speak out about the learning conditions in their schools. They are what assure parents they are getting the real story at conferences, or PTA meetings, or when they read an interview with a teacher in the newspaper. These laws are the teachers’ First Amendment. Educators will protect their voice in decisions affecting their students. We will watch carefully as this case moves through the appeal process.”

“The vast majority of Minnesota teachers do a good job under difficult circumstances,” added Specht. “Focusing on due process protections for the rest is a distraction from the real priorities facing our schools, such as improving access to high-quality preschools, expanding full-service community schools, recruiting and retaining more teachers of color, hiring more support staff to eliminate the school-to-prison pipeline, and making college more affordable for everyone.”

In Judge Margaret Marrinan’s [Oct. 26, 2016, order](#) dismissing the plaintiff’s lawsuit, she wrote the plaintiffs could draw no connections between low academic achievement and Minnesota’s due process laws for teachers. Judge Marrinan also noted the state Supreme Court has repeatedly recognized the legitimacy of the state’s tenure laws, in one case calling them, “wise legislation, promotive of the best interests, not only of teachers affected, but of the schools as well.”

### About Education Minnesota

Education Minnesota is the voice for professional educators and students. Education Minnesota’s members include teachers and education support professionals in Minnesota’s public school districts, faculty members at Minnesota’s community and technical colleges and University of Minnesota campuses in Duluth and Crookston, retired educators and student teachers. Education Minnesota is affiliated with the American Federation of Teachers, National Education Association and AFL-CIO.

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