

## Education Minnesota

# Staff at Isanti charter school joins Education Minnesota

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ST. PAUL, Minn. Nov. 8, 2017 – The instructional staff at the Art & Science Academy charter school in Isanti, Minn., has voted to form a local chapter of Education Minnesota, the statewide labor union of more than 86,000 educators.

The staff voted overwhelmingly in favor Wednesday afternoon. The group of 28 educators, primarily teachers, will now elect their local leaders, write founding documents and begin negotiating their first contract with the charter school's managers.

"This is a great opportunity to make ASA a more productive and efficient place to work and learn. This step will allow us to focus on teaching our students while negotiating for fair, safe and equitable learning conditions for all," said two academy teachers, Anne Rood and Jacob Kuehl, in a joint statement Wednesday. "We are excited for the opportunity to join Education Minnesota."

The Art & Science Academy becomes the third charter school organized by Education Minnesota, joining the Community School of Excellence and the Twin Cities German Immersion School, both in St. Paul.

The Art & Science Academy will also be the 13th new local union organized by Education Minnesota since Jan. 1, 2016. Education support professionals, or ESPs, comprise most of the 12 most recent new locals, including:

1. Renville County West ESP
2. Goodhue County Education District ESP
3. Anoka Hennepin ESP SRP/KRP (school readiness/kindergarten readiness)
4. Duluth Integration Specialists ESP
5. ISD 916 Community Experts
6. Kenyon Wanamingo ESP
7. Byron ESP
8. Forest Lake ESP
9. Twin Cities German Immersion School ESP
10. Hiawatha Valley Education District ESP
11. St. James ESP custodians
12. Kasson Mantorville ESP secretaries

Denise Specht, president of Education Minnesota, said the growing financial pressures on working people and the increasing stress of working in public education have prompted more people to form unions.

"Everyone wants to be happy at their job and earn enough to sustain their family," Specht said. "The best way to do that is by coming together in union and negotiating a contract that guarantees a fair return for your work and a

greater say in your workplace. Almost every Minnesotan still has the freedom to organize. It's surprising more people aren't taking advantage of it."

### **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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