

Education Minnesota

Due process protections for teachers benefit parents and students

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ST. PAUL, Minn. June 28, 2017 – A group of plaintiffs supported by two advocacy groups funded by the powerful Walton family on Wednesday asked the Minnesota Court of Appeals to revive their lawsuit seeking to eliminate due process protections for unionized teachers in Minnesota.

Ramsey County District Judge Margaret Marrinan dismissed *Forslund v. State of Minnesota* in October. In her ruling, she noted the state Supreme Court has repeatedly recognized the legitimacy of the state's due process laws, in one case calling them, "wise legislation, promotive of the best interests, not only of teachers affected, but of the schools as well."

The Forslund lawsuit does not name Education Minnesota as a defendant, but the union did jointly file a friend-of-the-court brief with the Minnesota Association of Secondary School principals. Also filing a brief in support of the state were TakeAction Minnesota, ISALAH and Centro de Trabajadores Unidos en Lucha, which is also known as the Center for Workers United in Justice

Education Minnesota President Denise Specht released the following statement in response to the oral arguments on Wednesday.

"The system of due process protections for teachers has been upheld by many Minnesota courts over many decades and we're confident this court will reach the same conclusions," Specht said. "Due process protections are earned by Minnesota teachers after they have passed a lengthy probationary period and have met certain performance expectations. These laws don't prevent bad teachers from getting fired, they prevent good teachers from being fired for bad reasons."

"Due process laws protect teachers who speak out about the learning conditions in their schools and advocate for students on the margins," Specht said. "They protect teachers who don't look like their administrators from discriminatory firings and layoffs. They assure parents can get the truth at parent-teacher conferences and that teachers can speak honestly when interviewed by the media. These laws give educators their voice in decisions affecting their students, and Education Minnesota will defend them."

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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