

Education Minnesota

Anniversary of Castile's death reminds educators of the work to be done

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ST. PAUL, Minn. July 6, 2017 – The one-year anniversary of the shooting death of Philando Castile during a traffic stop is a reminder of all the work to be done by educators and others to interrupt discrimination and give all students the freedom to pursue their dreams, said Denise Specht, president of Education Minnesota.

“Philando remembered the names of the 500 children he served every day in the cafeteria at the J.J. Hill Montessori Magnet School in St. Paul, so it’s only fair we remember him today,” Specht said. “He was a good man and his death has left a hole in the St. Paul school community, his family and the lives of all the children who knew him as their lunchroom friend.”

“The circumstances of the shooting death of Philando by a police officer, and the verdict reached last month, remind many of us we must do more for students who look like Philando,” Specht said. “With our community allies, we continue our work for racial and economic justice. For our educators, we offer the training that transforms good intentions into concrete results, with classes in effective advocacy for racial equity, reforming biased systems of school discipline, and stopping hate speech, to name just a few. Our work on these issues, as both a leader and a partner, will go on until the work is done.”

Castile was a member of Teamsters Local 320. Though he was not a member of Education Minnesota, his commitment to students was as strong as any teacher, college instructor or education support professional represented by our union.

Also on Thursday, the National Education Association approved a new business item honoring Castile during the union’s annual meeting in Boston. Education Minnesota is affiliated with both the NEA and the American Federation of Teachers. The NEA item states:

“NEA will urge that individual civil rights are respected in all incidents in which educators are involved with law enforcement, particularly when educators comply with directives from those authorities. As part of this process, NEA will reach out to law enforcement agencies to encourage a collaboration with educators and community groups. NEA will honor Philando Castile as an educator. Using available media resources, NEA will express its disappointment with the Philando Castile case and the apparent disregard of civil rights protections.”

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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