

Education Minnesota

Single-day MEA conference features speakers on organizing, mental health

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ST. PAUL, Minn., Oct. 8, 2018 – The shortened annual conference of the Minnesota Educator Academy, or MEA, will be Thursday, Oct. 18, and feature keynote speakers on mental health, the effects of social media on adolescents and community organizing for strong public schools.

The union changed the conference this year partly in response to the Janus decision by the U.S. Supreme Court and the national, billionaire-funded, anti-union campaign that followed it. The 2018 MEA conference will be one day, not two, and restricted to current union members.

“The MEA conference will still be there for all our members who need training for re-licensure or who want to improve their skills,” said Denise Specht, president of Education Minnesota. “But in this new environment, union educators can no longer subsidize the professional development that should be provided by the charter-school industry and private schools.”

The conference will feature a comprehensive set of classes for educators. As of Monday, classes on student mental health, suicide prevention, cultural competency and increasing student engagement were among the most popular among educators who registered in advance.

The featured speakers include Jitu Brown, the national director of Journey for Justice, an alliance of more than 30 grassroots groups in two dozen cities. Minnesota Teacher of the Year Kelly Holstine will explain how educators who work to improve their own mental health have a positive effect on students. Erin Walsh of Mind Positive Parenting will describe the latest research on the effect of digital media on developing brains.

The conference returns to The Saint Paul RiverCentre, and will remain the largest professional development opportunity for educators in Minnesota.

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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