



MINNESOTA EDUCATOR

A publication for the members of Education Minnesota

March 2018

PREPARATION ROOTED IN EQUITY

The latest report from Education Minnesota's Educator Policy Innovation Center (EPIC) focuses on the importance of linking high-quality teacher preparation programs to the state's standards for licensing teachers, a connection the Legislature severed last year.

The report, "The Merits of Teaching Preparation Grounded in Equity: Critical Components for Developing and Retaining Educators Who are Responsive to Minnesota's Diverse and Complex Communities," documents how graduates of high-quality teacher preparation programs can raise student achievement and increase education equity.

Read more about the report and the educators who worked on it on page 3.



Almost half of local contracts settled

The number of settled local 2017-19 contracts is approaching 50 percent, according to Education Minnesota data as of press time.

This round of bargaining has a number of issues to deal with such as unrequested leaves of absence (ULA), tiered licensure and the rights of unions.

Legislation eliminating statutory default language on unrequested leaves of absence (ULA or layoff) in Minn. Stat. 122A.40, subd. 11 passed the Legislature in June 2017. Local unions are making sure their contract language for layoffs does

not just reference the state statute, but has language in place that outlines how layoffs will be handled.

At least 11 local unions have reported bargained changes to their ULA language in their 2017-19 contract.

These locals made changes to existing language using Education Minnesota's suggested language. Locals who have approved the new ULA language include Holdingford, Cass Lake-Bena, Warren-Alvarado-Oslo and St. James.

Education Minnesota will be sharing a memorandum of understanding (MOU) strategy this spring, focusing

on locals who have only statutory references or no ULA process language in their current contracts.

As court cases and proposed legislation to strip unions of their collective bargaining rights continues, locals are encouraged to include maintenance of membership language.

School districts must continue to honor our members' decision to belong to our union, and the maintenance of membership language Education Minnesota has developed and encouraged all locals to bargain is one element of protecting the rights of a

union and members' right to choose to belong.

Other major contract issues this year have been class size, testing and the need for more student service specialties. Economic welfare and the ability to attract and retain high quality educators also remain high on the priority list for bargaining teams.

The St. Paul Federation of Teachers will be voting on their agreement with the district as of press time, after approving a strike in early February. They reached a settlement just one day before the strike was to begin.

Educators bargained for, and received, additional

supports for English language learners, students in special education and laid the groundwork for a partnership to increase funding for public schools.

Education Minnesota has numerous resources to help those locals who are still bargaining.

For resources to help support your local's bargaining, sample language, a contract and salary schedule look-up tool and settlement reports, go to www.educationminnesota.org/member-benefits.aspx#Bargaining-ally.

WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU!

Read the article about the EPIC report on the importance of high-quality teacher preparation programs and how they connect to recruitment and retention of educators. Then answer the question, "What do you think is needed to improve recruitment and retention of educators?" and send it to us via email, Twitter or Facebook to be entered into a drawing for a \$25 Target gift card.

Email us at educator@edmn.org or post on Twitter or Facebook using #MNEducator. Find us on Facebook at Education Minnesota and on Twitter @EducationMN. Answers will be run in next month's Minnesota Educator.

Congratulations to last month's contest winner, **Michael Marschel** of Royalton.

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CORRECTION: In last month's issue, the local name of Education Minnesota-Roseville was incorrect on page 7. The Minnesota Educator regrets this error.

Educators must stand together to challenge harmful policies

There’s an old saying that you can’t put a square peg into a round hole, but it’s not true. A big enough hammer can bash home any peg, if you don’t mind breaking everything in the process.

I’ve been thinking about that as I watch national networks trying to find ways to pound their solutions onto local issues. I doubt they care about the collateral damage of their actions.

For example, there’s no grassroots call in Minnesota for exotic types of school vouchers. Polls consistently show Minnesotans are very happy with their local schools and teachers. But our union still expects to fight another voucher bill this year at the state Legislature.

The most powerful national groups on the right are pushing vouchers, so vouchers will be pushed on Minnesotans. Americans for Prosperity, the political arm of the Koch network, argues taxpayers should subsidize private or parochial school tuition. As does the conservative Bradley Foundation of Milwaukee, which worries about K-12 education “monopolies.”

We expect another one of those voucher-backing groups, the pro-business American Legislative Exchange Council, or ALEC, will use the new federal tax law to argue for reducing support for local government,



Denise Specht, president

including school districts.

Shortly before the tax bill passed, five Minnesota lawmakers signed a letter from ALEC lobbying Congress to eliminate the deduction for state and local taxes used by people in states with good public services, like Minnesota.

“Especially in the highest taxed states, the loss of the deduction will increase community demands for more responsible management of government resources,” the letter says.

Personally, I don’t know anyone who asked to lose that deduction just so Congress could give huge tax breaks to multimillionaires, big corporations and hedge fund managers.

And I’m sure the change came as an unpleasant surprise to the tens of thousands of Minnesotans

who pre-paid their property taxes in December.

But ALEC got the tax policy it wanted from Congress, and regular Minnesotans helped pay for it. Hammer. Square peg. Collateral damage.

A third example of national groups swooping into to break things in Minnesota is more of a prediction.

In a few months, the U.S. Supreme Court will rule in *Janus v. AFSCME* in a way that we expect will eliminate fair-share fees for everyone working in the public sector in America. Such a ruling will weaken unions. Our opponents are delirious at the possibility.

The Freedom Foundation wrote about its plans to weaponize the ruling in a recent fundraising appeal, “... the unions won’t go away without a fight. They won’t go away even with a fight. They won’t go away until we drive the proverbial stake through their hearts and finish them off for good.”

The Freedom Foundation, which is based in Washington state, receives funding from, of course, the Bradley Foundation and is part of the Koch’s network of advocacy groups. The foundation has run door-to-door campaigns in the states of Washington and Oregon to persuade members to quit their unions. Someone working for the foundation, or a similar organization, may be at your

door this summer.

The most frustrating thing about all of this is that our school communities are as unique as our families. Just as we would resent a distant group with an agenda of its own mandating how we live our personal lives, so we also resist when powerful lobby groups from Milwaukee, or Virginia, or Arkansas, use their power to impose bad policies on our schools.

They don’t know us. They don’t know the names of our students and the gifts and traumas they carry. And, from what I can see, they don’t have much interest in learning.

In contrast, Education Minnesota has worked to raise up the voices of our communities and individual educators. While they are top down, we are bottom up.

We’ve seen it with common good bargaining in Minneapolis, St. Paul and other cities. We are increasing engagement in local schools through comprehensive needs assessments, a part of the new Every Student Succeeds Act, or ESSA.

Within our union, we’ve worked to create more opportunities for classroom educators to speak out. One example is the recent paper by the Educator Policy Innovation Center, or EPIC, on teacher preparation and education equity. The lived experience of the 11

classroom educators who contributed to the report was invaluable.

While it’s certainly true that our union sometimes takes ideas from the National Education Association, the American Federation of Teachers and even other state unions—such as full-service community schools—there’s an important difference.

Education Minnesota is a democratic organization. If the educators directly affected by a policy don’t like it they can speak to their locally elected president, their representative on the governing board, me or the other two statewide officers. The Koch brothers, the Bradley Foundation, the Walton Family Foundation, the paid bloggers and the all rest are accountable to no one.

And that’s the problem. Frederick Douglass, the great abolitionist once said, “Power concedes nothing without demand. It never did, and it never will.”

We cannot be silent, and we cannot let them divide us, if we are to challenge policies that don’t fit our communities and may harm our students.

Together,

Twitter: @DeniseSpecht

What issue could Minnesota tackle at the Legislature this year that would help you most in your classroom or the profession?

In last month’s Minnesota Educator, we continued the “we want to hear from you” contest and received responses from all over the state via email and Twitter. Here is a selection of the answers. Look on page 1 for this month’s question and how to submit an answer. Your answer enters you into a drawing for a \$25 Target gift card!

“The issue that could be tackled with the Legislature this year that would help my classroom is to work to keep class sizes low.” – Jodi Prchal, New Prague Education Association

“I believe ‘holding back attacks on unions and policies related to education’ is very important as the profession continues to work on attracting and retaining quality educators.” – Melissa Williams, Education Richfield

“There are many important issues at the Legislature this year, but I think the issue of the changes in the rules and standards of teacher licensing is an important issue to tackle. The high standards for licensing Minnesota teachers help define teaching as a profession, not just a job.” – Jill Nysse, Winona Education Association

“As a professional, I’d like to see better health insurance for rural districts. That would entail a unified health insurance plan for all educators.” – Michael Marschel, Royalton Federation of Teachers

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New EPIC report: Well-trained teachers important for student success

In 2017, Minnesota’s state lawmakers drastically reduced the requirements to teach in Minnesota classrooms when they created the tiered licensure system. The Legislature erased the link between teacher licensure and high-quality preparation programs.

In response, Education Minnesota’s Educator Policy Innovation Center brought together a team of teachers, education support professionals, school counselors and a teacher preparation student to study the connection between well-trained teachers and student success. The educators featured in this article were on the team.

“As a student, the new licensure system really makes me wonder why I’m going through a teacher prep program,” said University of Minnesota student Chris Peterson. “When I get my license in two years, I will be at Tier 3, the same level people can be at who didn’t go tens of thousands of dollars into debt. It cheapens the value of teacher preparation, which is sad because all the research shows that teacher preparation really does matter. I know a lot of my classmates have said that they came to Minnesota specifically to get their teaching license because for so long the Minnesota license was thought of as one of the best.”

“I cannot imagine other professionals using a tiered system and I feel it is a step backwards for our students,” said Deanna Fosness, a teacher at the state of Minnesota’s Saint Peter residential treatment facility. “Given the option of going to a Tier 1 doctor or a Tier 4 doctor, I would choose a Tier 4 doctor. The problem is that students do not get to choose their teachers nor their tier level. How are lowering the requirements for teachers going to help our students more? Not long ago, all teachers had to be ‘highly-qualified.’ Now we are changing it to ‘anyone who went to college will do.’”

Lawmakers made the decision to change the licensure system even though decades of academic research has concluded that quality teacher preparation, not on the job training, yields better outcomes for students.

The report, “The Merits of Teaching Preparation Grounded in Equity: Critical Components for Developing and Retaining Educators Who are Responsive to Minnesota’s Diverse and Complex Communities,” documents how graduates of high-quality teacher preparation

programs can raise student achievement and increase education equity.

The report looks at numerous scholastic articles and research, all of which confirm that properly-trained teachers are best for student achievement.

The research found that:

1. Properly trained classroom teachers produce higher achieving students as measured by academic assessments.

2. Teachers lacking preparation leads to negative outcomes for students.

The report suggests, based on research, that all future teachers in Minnesota, from both traditional institutes of higher education and those from alternative pathways, must receive quality preparation in these seven components:

1. All teaching candidates need training in content knowledge and content-specific methodology.

2. All teaching candidates need training in childhood development, including social-emotional learning and trauma-informed practices.

3. All teaching candidates need training in classroom management, student behavior and restorative practices.

4. All teaching candidates need training in robust and multi-faceted training in assessment.

5. All teaching candidates need training on teaching diverse learners.

6. All teaching candidates need training in special education.

7. All teaching candidates need clinical experience tied to theory and built on collaboration.

The report looks at how proper teacher preparation can not only get educators ready to be in the classroom, but keep them in the classroom. More than 50,000 licensed teachers in the state are not working in classrooms.

“(This report) will give educators a perspective they may not have seen before, as we move away from the politics of which side is right, and move toward a common solution and common goal of making sure teachers are more than adequately-trained and equipped to handle the first few years of their own classroom without burning out and leaving the profession,” said Tricia Miller, a Spanish teacher in Spring Lake Park.

“There’s a weird narrative that anyone can go into teaching. If anyone can go in to the profession, why are they not staying? It feeds into how we think about retention and diversifying our workforce,” said Sumair Sheikh, a career and college



Members of the EPIC report’s advisory team present their findings at a press conference at the state Capitol Feb. 16. Rosemount-Apple Valley-Eagan teacher Dennis Draughn talked about the importance of quality teacher preparation as being necessary for recruiting and retaining educators, especially educators of color. Other members of the team include (from left) Minneapolis science teacher Angela Osuji, Intermediate School District 287 behavior specialist Marcell Branch and University of Minnesota student Chris Peterson. They were joined by Education Minnesota President Denise Specht (not pictured).

HOW CAN LAWMAKERS AND STAKEHOLDERS ACT ON THIS OPPORTUNITY?

1. Close the loophole in Minnesota’s tiered licensure system that allows a candidate to attain a Tier 3 license without having completed teacher preparation.

2. Provide financial support and other resources to Tier 1 and Tier 2 teachers to move through teacher preparation programs.

3. Invest resources in higher quality and collaborative relationships between teacher preparation programs and school districts.

4. Fully fund public institutions of higher education in the form of subsidizing free/affordable college education, tuition tax relief and education debt relief.

5. Increase teacher salaries to incentivize long-term commitments to our most diverse and our most impoverished schools.

6. Build grow-your-own programs that provide education support professionals quality pathways to become licensed teachers.

7. Support research about how Minnesota teacher preparation programs can achieve better results for a diverse demographic of teacher candidates.

8. Expand the Minnesota Teacher Loan Repayment Program by providing adequate funding and broadening eligibility requirements to include school-based counselors, nurses, social workers, psychologists, speech language pathologists, occupational therapists and other support personnel.

readiness specialist in Duluth. “How does that then ensure our students feel welcome in the classroom and succeed and achieve to their greatest potential?”

The report also looks at how proper teacher preparation programs also help in retaining educators of color.

“Minnesota needs more teachers of color, but using that as an excuse to lower standards is unacceptable and insulting,” said Dennis Draughn, a high school social studies teacher in Rosemount-Apple Valley-Eagan. “Trying to increase the diversity of the teaching staff by lowering the standards sends the message that we are not capable of meeting the standards to begin with. This is a slap at every minority teacher in this profession. If we, as a state, don’t address the other reasons why people of color are not going into the field of education, and staying in the field of education, we are guaranteeing that the problem will never be fixed.”

Educators who contributed

to the report really pushed for the requirement that teacher candidates needed to be trained in social-emotional learning and trauma-informed practices, as well as working with diverse learners. These educators are seeing the change in Minnesota’s student population and know the expertise it takes to address the changing needs of those students.

“An underprepared teacher can stunt a child’s intellectual growth. We continue, or even increase, systemic racism when we send teachers who simply aren’t ready, to work with our immigrant students and students of color,” said Angela Osuji, a science teacher in Minneapolis Public Schools. “Preparing all teachers to work effectively with a diverse student body requires a commitment to equity, a commitment to culturally responsive teaching, and a commitment to training all educators in trauma-informed teaching.”

As a behavior specialist in Intermediate School District

287, Marcell Branch sees the assistance that some teachers need from education support professionals like himself, especially when dealing with students with severe behavior issues.

“I have seen this first hand at West Education,” said Branch. “My students come from diverse backgrounds. They face trials and tribulations on a regular basis. Some students deal with poverty. Others have been touched by the justice system—some as juveniles and some as adults. My students have needs a teacher who is just thrown into the classroom can’t meet. My students need teachers who, on their first day, can manage a class, calm a student and just plain understand the fundamentals.”

Read the full report and learn more about the EPIC program at www.educationminnesota.org/advocacy#Educator-Policy-Innovation-Center.

Unions launch ad campaign ahead of Supreme Court decision

Minnesota’s Public Sector Union Alliance has launched a digital advertising campaign as part of its work to build a new narrative about public services, workers and their unions.

The ads will appear on social media sites, YouTube, Pandora, Hulu and other video partners until the Supreme Court makes a decision in the *Janus v. AFSCME* case.

Education Minnesota is a leading member of the Public Sector Union Alliance, which is a group of unions representing public employees across Minnesota working together to help fight off the attacks against organized labor.

The videos include a nurse, teacher, home health care worker, state employee and others sharing why unions are important in their lives, both at work and at home.

Check out the videos and find more information at bettertogethermn.com. Please share the ads on social media using [#betterlivesMN](https://twitter.com/betterlivesMN).

Featured in one of the videos are Steve and Kelly Kosloski, teachers in Maple Lake and Wright Tech.

The Kosloskis have always been members of their unions, but their activism kicked into gear after attending one of Education Minnesota’s

Degrees, Not Debt clinics.

“We were struggling with student loans and trying to get information on the forgiveness programs,” said Kelly. “We know that this issue—it’s a nationwide crisis. We know it won’t be resolved for us, but we see our students coming through the system and if they are going to college, they will have to take out student loans.”

“I want my students to go into education, but I’m apprehensive because of how it’s funded,” said Steve. “The lack of supports, the debt you have to incur. It takes you quite some time to dig out of that hole. We are both fully-employed educators and at the end of the month, we have to be digging into our very small savings account.”

Education debt may have made the Kosloskis more vocal in their union, but they always have believed in what the labor movement stands for.

“My mom was a teacher in Wisconsin. My dad worked on the railroad and was a custodian,” said Steve. “Their retirement was impacted negatively (after Act 10 was passed).”

“We let corporations lobby. Let us lobby for our interests,” said Kelly. “We’re the working class. We are

WHAT IS JANUS V. AFSCME?

Janus v. AFSCME is a lawsuit filed by Mark Janus, an Illinois state employee. The suit challenges the authority of AFSCME and other public-sector employee unions to collect fair-share fees from all employees they represent. Janus will be heard by the court Feb. 26 and a decision is expected by June 2018.

The plaintiffs want the court to overturn a 1977 decision in *Abood v. Detroit Board of Education*. The Supreme Court unanimously ruled in *Abood* that teachers, firefighters, health care workers and other public employees have the right to join together to form a union, and the union would be their exclusive representative for bargaining wages, benefits and working conditions, just like workers in the private sector. SCOTUS also ruled in *Abood* that states could charge workers who didn’t want to join the union a fair-share fee that covers collective bargaining for everyone in a bargaining unit—members and non-members. If the plaintiffs prevail, fees for non-members would no longer be mandatory.

Who would it affect?

About half of the states, including Minnesota, have laws establishing mandatory “fair-share” or “agency” fees employees pay to unions. The remaining 28 “right-to-work” states either prohibit collective bargaining by public workers or ban mandatory dues and fees. Although the case directly involves AFSCME, a decision could

affect all unions representing public workers, depending how narrowly or broadly the Supreme Court rules.

Who is underwriting the case?

The Liberty Justice Center, the legal arm of the right-wing Illinois Policy Institute, is arguing on behalf of Illinois state employee Mark Janus, the primary plaintiff. The Illinois Policy Institute has opposed efforts to increase state taxes and supported state spending cuts, converting public pensions to defined contribution plans and expanding voucher programs and charter schools.

What is a fair-share fee?

The fair-share fee represents the portion of union spending that is related to collective bargaining and enforcing a collective employment agreement covering everyone in a bargaining unit. In Minnesota, fair-share fees cannot be greater than 85 percent of the dues that the union charges full members. The fee ensures that individuals who get the benefit of a bargained and enforced contract help contribute to the cost of maintaining it. It does not include the union’s costs of campaigning for candidates and lobbying for issues at the state or federal level.

For more information about the Janus case and other attacks on unions, go to www.educationminnesota.org/advocacy.aspx#attacks-on-unions.

the ones doing this. Instead of just complaining about it, the union can put our concerns into words that can be brought to our legislators to maybe get some action. Me

on my own, I get a response with a form letter.”

“The union has the ability to allow us to have one voice and come together and try to push districts to make the

right call with teachers that are asked to do more and more for the same amount of pay,” Steve said.

Farmington band director receives national honor

When Erin Holmes was in eighth grade, she decided she wanted to be a band teacher and she hasn’t looked back since.

Holmes’ dedication to her career and her students is partly why she was named one of the 2017 “50 Directors Who Make a Difference” by School Band and Orchestra magazine. The publication honors one director per state. This year, there were 880 nominations from across the nation.

Holmes is the director of bands at Farmington High School and has been teaching for 18 years. She currently teaches wind ensemble, varsity band, jazz ensemble, marching band and pep band.

Holmes started playing piano at an early age, but picked up the saxophone in fifth grade. At her small school, she had the same band director throughout middle and high school, who fostered that love of music and inspired her future career.

“As an eighth grader, there was just something that made me say, ‘I don’t want to not do this. I want to be a band director for the rest of my life,’” she said.

Holmes never faltered from that, and now she wants her students to experience the same passion and connection to music she felt sitting in her school’s band room.

“Music is so different

because the kids that are here love music,” she said. “Whether it’s listening to music that is completely different than what we’re teaching on a daily basis to something they are feeling inside, it makes them have that drive.”

Even though she teaches band, the music comes second in Holmes’ classroom.

“You need to make them feel like they have a place here,” she said. “I want them to feel safe and know that I care.”

Part of how she “makes a difference” in her classroom is creating connections.

“We’re so lucky in the music field because we get them for all four years,” she said. “With something like marching band where it’s after school and all summer long, you can create even more connections with a smaller group.”

Holmes says her office door is always open, whether that is to listen to a piece a student is rehearsing or just to talk with a student who needs a listening ear.

Holmes also shares her stresses and feelings with her students in order to make those connections.

“I let them know that I’m human, that we’re all human,” she said. “We have fun. We have down times. We have rougher rehearsals. I admit all the time on the podium when I make a



Erin Holmes, a Farmington High School band director, works with her wind ensemble group. Holmes was recently named one of the “50 Directors Who Make a Difference” by School Band and Orchestra magazine.

mistake. But that’s how we grow and how we learn.”

“I teach them that it’s OK that we fail and that this is a safe space to do that. The more that we fail, the more you learn, especially when you step out of your comfort zone. And I give them that support that they need.”

Holmes is also set to take over as the head of the All

State Jazz program for the Minnesota Music Educators Association. She will be the first woman to have that position. She will run the jazz summer camp and the performances that group does throughout the year.

While her dream of being a band director started in her youth, Holmes said there is still something

about the career that keeps her motivated.

“There’s something about this that I don’t want to stop doing,” she said. “And whether the kids go into music education, minor in music, I want them to keep playing or keep listening because it does something for them.”

Coding, computer science in the classroom

Bringing computer science concepts into her elementary classroom started as a fun activity for Angie Kalthoff, but now it is her passion.

Kalthoff is now a technology integrationist in the St. Cloud district and spends her days helping educators bring tech into the classroom and integrate it into their existing lessons.

“I first started teaching English to English learners at Discovery Elementary in St. Cloud, and soon after, my district received a grant for iPod Touches,” she said. “I started to look at how we could use them for pre-literacy in schools.”

Kalthoff then found the resources on Code.org while teaching summer school.

“I wasn’t really sure what coding meant for elementary students,” said Kalthoff. “I started with Code.org because kids were able to drag and drop blocks while learning computer science concepts. In addition, they had free unplugged lessons for educators that helped me make the connection to my classroom. They have puzzles online that teach about loops. They also have an open sandbox where they can play, build and explore.”

For elementary classes,

FIND LOCAL CODING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Educators can learn more about the professional development opportunities outlined in this article at bit.ly/codewithangie and codesavvy.org/educators/cohort.

Kalthoff recommends Kodable, Code.org or Scratch, Jr.

Kalthoff is quick to remind educators that doing coding in a classroom doesn’t mean that students need to have access to computers.

“There are unplugged lessons,” she said. “Kids don’t have to have access to computers or tablets to learn these concepts. They have card games to teach about conditionals or you can pretend your friend is a robot as you learn about algorithms, or create a beaded bracelet as you learn about binary.”

Teaching other skills by using technology is also something Kalthoff works on in her district.

“The variety of apps available for educators has grown in the past few years,” she said. “But you need to ask, ‘What they are doing and how do you apply those skills in other areas?’ We won’t just create an iMovie

to create a movie. But how do you problem-solve the story, what are the approaches to putting it all together?”

Andrea Wilson Vazquez, a Makerspace teacher and innovation coach in Intermediate District 287, also found that passion for computer science after volunteering with CoderDojoTC and TechnovationMN through the local not-for-profit, Code Savvy.

“I started implementing coding clubs at my school and before I knew it, the momentum had grown so much that I began working with classroom teachers to integrate computer science into their existing curriculum. I discovered a passion for teaching all learners digital problem-solving and creative computing,” said Wilson Vazquez.

Both Kalthoff and Wilson Vazquez say that integrating computer science and computational thinking

into classrooms has rippling benefits for students.

“You’re not focusing on just programming or controlling robots,” said Kalthoff. “You’re thinking about your thinking and how to gather data and break things down. You have to break it down step-by-step. You’re finding patterns.”

“When I see a student who is really articulate in their writing and using great detail, I talk to them about how they could have a career in computer science because they are creating an algorithm with their words,” Kalthoff said.

“Computer science and computational thinking teach us an amazing set of problem-solving skills, including breaking a problem into smaller parts (decomposition), following a set of steps or instructions (algorithms), recognizing patterns, and paying attention to the most important parts of a process or a problem (abstraction),” said Wilson Vazquez.

Kalthoff and Wilson Vazquez have taken their love of computer science and coding and are now helping other educators learn how to integrate them into their classrooms.

TECHNOLOGY IN SCHOOLS

Kalthoff teaches free classes through Code.org. The professional development workshops are seven hours, but Kalthoff says the length shouldn’t scare off people. Teachers leave the workshop with a curriculum guide, swag bag and certificate of attendance.

“We do a lot of group-based activities, and we’re up and moving around. We talk about how to get their classes set up and learn a few of the lessons as a student would.”

Wilson Vazquez works with Code Savvy to bring high-quality professional development to Minnesota educators.

“One of the most popular professional development offerings through Code Savvy’s Get With the Program is our MN Coding in the Classroom Leadership Cohort, an initiative that aims to expand computer science education to reach all students in Minnesota through monthly professional development and resource sharing sessions for K-12 and community educators,” she said.

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Member help wanted in 2018 elections

The 2018 election will be one of the most important of my lifetime. These elections are, at the same time, the most important in Education Minnesota history. Let's not fool ourselves or think somebody else will step up. Right now, it's on us.

We must once again join together in union, stand up and fight back. Too long we've taken for granted the freedom to join together and negotiate a fair return on our work. Starting today, we can help win the 2018 elections and I'll tell you how.

Winning in 2018 won't be easy. It will take early mornings, late nights and a kind of extraordinary self-discipline we didn't know we possessed. We have our work cut out for us. Victory can be ours if we start immediately.

With urgency, humility and moral conviction, I offer the following three ways to get involved in the 2018 campaign to get pro-public education candidates into elected office:

- Make a personal commitment to get—and stay—involved in the 2018 campaign. This is the single most important thing you can do. Your willingness

to offer yourself is of critical importance to the healthy functioning of our democracy. We need your dedication, time, heart and commitment.

- Research. Learn. Educate. Vote. Stay laser focused on the issues that matter most to you. Don't let candidate platitudes distract from what matters most: your care for kids, your family and values, your commitment to the profession of education.
- Be a Worksite Action Leader in your building, school, worksite or on your campus. Worksite Action Leaders tenacious critical thinkers and powerful advocates who won't take no for an answer. You are the ill-behaved ones who will make history.

To win in 2018, we need to galvanize a critical mass of dedicated, passionate, committed and participating leader-members. While some political philosophers have said the basic unit of power is the one-on-one relationship, I argue the basic unit of union power is the organized workplace—organized working people with strong

relationships oriented toward building power.

We need resilient folks willing to put themselves out there, stand up, take an extra step, speak out and take action for the public good.

Worksite Action Leaders are the vanguard of our movement in 2018. They are the frontline of our advocacy and leadership. Worksite Action Leaders will—singlehandedly—decide whether we win or lose. No charismatic leader can substitute for a network of organized organizers working collaboratively for governing power. This is the history of the labor movement. This is the reason we have a 40-hour workweek and a weekend. We are the power of the union.

More than 33,000 educators did not vote in the last midterm election in Minnesota. To overcome the associated obstacles, we need a cohort of 1,200 Worksite Action Leaders identified, recruited, trained and supported to win in 2018. Education Minnesota has 17 field offices across the state, fully equipped with professional, well-organized, poised and eager staff-advocates. We are ready, willing and able to support

educators who want to take action in their buildings, worksites, schools and on their campuses.

Full dues paying members of Education Minnesota are at the heart of the 2018 campaign. You are the force to be reckoned with in Minnesota. Educators influence, and have influenced, every single man, woman, child and person-not-gender-affiliated, in our beloved state. Your reach, scope and moral authority are unmatched. You are king and queen makers. You are the power and leadership.

Education Minnesota is the voice of professional educators and students. Too few of us take time to reflect on the history and significance of what that means. Voice is much more than the mere act of speaking or verbal utterance. The word "voice" comes from the Latin "vocem," which later gave us the words "vocation" and "advocate." On one hand, our vocation is more than our job. On the other hand, to advocate is put ourselves out there—to use our voice and values for the reason we're here at all in the first place. Voice, vocation and advocacy are intimately related and inextricable

from one another. Every single educator I've met has a firm grasp on who they are and why they do what they do. We must, to survive in an education setting. Each educator has a voice and a vocation; about this I have no doubt. Further, every one of us is slowly being woke to the idea that we have, simultaneously, another dimension to our work. That dimension is electoral advocacy.

We can win in 2018. Freedom, affordable childcare, health care and housing, equity, universal pre-K and full-service community schools, voice, the abolition of education debt, dignity at work, free college and more are on the ballot once again. These values and virtues are all within our reach and are incredibly possible.

To become a 2018 Worksite Action Leader in your building, worksite, school or on your campus, contact your Education Minnesota field staff for more information.

♦ **Matt Ryg**
Ryg is Education Minnesota's 2018 Field Campaign Coordinator

HOW TO STAY INFORMED, GET INVOLVED THIS LEGISLATIVE SESSION

The Minnesota Legislature convened its 2018 session on Feb. 20. Education Minnesota encourages its members to get active this session and make sure pro-education legislation gets passed.

Share your story at a lobby day

Educators are the best people to tell the stories of what is happening in Minnesota schools and Education Minnesota has a way for its members to meet with legislators face to face. All local unions or member groups can sign up for a lobby day. Education Minnesota will set up appointments with the legislators in your area, provide you a short briefing on what is happening at the Capitol and provide you resources for how to share your story effectively. Substitute, mileage and food reimbursements are available. For more information, go to www.educationminnesota.org/advocacy/at-the-legislature/details-on-lobby-days.



Members of Education Minnesota's educators of color forums participated in a lobby day during the 2017 legislative session, meeting with Sen. Chuck Wiger.

who your local legislator is? Find out on at our Policy Action Center at www.educationminnesota.org/policyactioncenter.



Rochester Education Association member Tucker Quetone testified against a Senate bill that would have allowed tax credits for private school tuition during the 2017 session.

Raise your voice by testifying at a hearing

Committee hearings are a focal point of the legislative process at the Capitol and give educators the chance to share their stories and make their voices heard. Contact Education Minnesota's lobby team at lobbyteam@edmn.org if you're interested in testifying before a legislative committee. The team can help you prepare your remarks, make sure you're on the agenda and get you in the right place at the right time.

View our legislative agenda online, connect with our lobbyists on issues you care about

Education Minnesota has lobbyists who spend their time fighting for public education and educators every day. But we still want to hear from you! Not only do we want you to come share your story at the Capitol, our lobbyists can help pass on your messages to legislators as well. Contact lobbyteam@edmn.org if there is something you care about that you would like us to fight for. Education Minnesota's legislative agenda is an overarching vision of what the organization believes the Legislature should do to ensure Minnesota has the best learning and working conditions in its public

schools. The guiding principles of this year's agenda are: Improving teaching leads to improving educational outcomes, engaging students is a crucial step toward their career success and investing in quality learning environments. Read our full legislative agenda at www.educationminnesota.org/advocacy/at-the-legislature.

Visit, use the Policy Action Center

Education Minnesota's Policy Action Center website is designed to keep members informed on important education issues, help them find and track legislation, connect with members of U.S. Congress and state legislators and give them the tools needed to be a successful education advocate. Members can send emails to their legislators, either with provided messages on certain topics or their own messages. Go to www.educationminnesota.org/policyactioncenter to see what Education Minnesota has put together to keep you up to date.

Read the Capitol Connection e-newsletter

Every Monday during the legislative session, Education Minnesota sends an e-newsletter called Capitol Connection to all members for whom we have email addresses. Capitol Connection summarizes the most recent actions affecting public education at the Legislature, and looks ahead to upcoming activities. It's an inside look at how legislative work affects our schools and students. If you're an Education Minnesota member and don't receive Capitol Connection but would like to, contact webmaster@edmn.org and put Capitol Connection in the subject line.

Connect with Hustle text alerts

Education Minnesota is launching a new texting platform, Hustle, which is a peer-to-peer mobile texting app. If you have given Education Minnesota your cellphone number, you may start receiving texts in regards to legislative issues that need your attention or action. If you receive a text, you will be able to write back and engage in a conversation about how to get involved and active.

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St. Paul teacher helps develop international curriculum

As the International Baccalaureate (IB) program coordinator and English teacher at St. Paul’s Harding High School, Erik Brandt has seen the impact the program has on his students. But as he looked at who was impacting the program curriculum, he knew something had to change.

“One thing I’ve noticed with the IB program is there are not a lot of people from schools like Harding at the decision-making table, involved in the curriculum-making,” said Brandt. “Harding High School is a big, inner city public high school. We have well over 50 languages spoken by students. We are easily 90 percent students of color.”

So when the call came out for teachers to apply to be on the literature curriculum review team, Brandt decided to go for it.

“I wrote a letter saying that no one from my school setting has been on the review committee, and they needed someone with my background, from my educational environment,” he said. “And they accepted me.”

Brandt started traveling to the Netherlands to participate in the review process.

“I’ve gone over to Holland six times, usually for about three to five days,” he said.

Brandt served on the committee with a team of

educators from all around the world, including Vietnam, Hong Kong, Argentina, Belgium, Canada, India, the United Kingdom, Germany, Spain and Japan.

“These people were teaching the same literature class I was, sometimes in different languages” said Brandt. “We would get into debates of an hour or more about assessment criteria, and the different meanings that key words and concepts have in different cultures. It was very eye-opening.”

While in the Netherlands, it became even more clear to Brandt that a public school voice was needed in this process.

“A lot of the other educators were teaching the DP Literature courses at international schools,” he said. “We were designing a class that needs to work for everyone—public schools with 35 kids in a class or private, international schools with eight people in a class.”

The differences in resources available to educators from around the world was very clear from their discussions as well, said Brandt.

“IB classes take exams at the end of the year,” he said. “The IB wants to go to online assessments, but this would require a tremendous amount of resources. If you have 300 kids taking the test, you need 300 computers.”

“Another educator said,

‘Can’t the students bring in their laptops from home and we’ll put the software on it?’ I quickly told them that of my whole student population, maybe 20 percent have a laptop and if they do, it’s for their entire family to use and we can’t just take it for a week and install software on it.”

Not only did Brandt help review the curriculum, he got to help design an oral assessment.

“I worked with a person from the UK and then the committee refined it,” he said. “We did a trial and made some changes. Then we did a trial of it with kids from Harding.”

That experience was especially meaningful for Brandt.

“Rarely do we as teachers get the opportunity to design something for our school or district to use,” he said. “I got to make something for the world to use, which will be over a million kids during the lifetime of the course.”

Brandt says through the experience he learned a lot about how to teach, changing his view of what he does every day.

“There are many ways to do it, to do it well and to do it right,” he said. “And the other people on the committee had a lot to learn from American kids.”

During this process, Brandt was bringing the



Erik Brandt, a St. Paul English teacher and IB coordinator, traveled to the Netherlands six times to help review the IB literature curriculum used across the globe. Brandt wanted to see a big, inner-city, public high school represented in the decision-making process, so he applied and was selected for the role.

information back to his IB colleagues at Harding and throughout St. Paul Public Schools and other Minnesota public schools that offer the Diploma Program.

“I would bounce ideas off everyone I could,” he said. “I wanted to bring as many voices from public school teachers to the table. It was definitely the collective wisdom of a lot of people who were guiding me in doing this.”

Taking a chance and applying for this program was a risk, but Brandt wants to encourage all educators to get involved in the work, especially in the IB program.

“I’m always encouraging teachers in IB schools to get involved,” he said. “They need to apply to become examiners or workshop leaders. We have a wealth of knowledge in Minnesota and not enough of us out there being leaders.”

“So often we doubt ourselves and we don’t think we’re worthy of applying for something. We are. So many of our teachers are skilled and wise. If there’s an opportunity for you to share your skills and wisdom, go for it!”

Teachers earn National Board Certification

Minnesota is home to a group of newly-named National Board Certified Teachers (NBCT) as of December 2017.

National Board Certification (NBC) is a voluntary, advanced teaching credential that goes beyond state licensure. NBC has national standards for what accomplished teachers should know and be able to do. The National Board

for Professional Teaching Standards certifies teachers who successfully complete the process.

Board certification is available in 25 certificate areas, from pre-K through 12th grade, which include content areas like art, career and technical education, library media, math, music and science, as well as generalists. Certification consists of four components:

Assessment of content knowledge, reflection on student work samples, video and analysis of teaching practice and documentation of the impact of assessment and collaboration on student learning.

The Minnesota National Board Certified Teachers Network was established to support candidates, promote National Board Certification and encourage

state and local leaders to provide needed incentives. The network, funded and facilitated by Education Minnesota, provides support to candidates and promotes National Board Certification in a variety of ways

The Education Minnesota Foundation for Excellence in Teaching and Learning will grant at least 10 scholarships up to \$500 per component (up to \$1,000 per application)

toward the application process for National Board Certification once per year. For more information about how to apply, go to www.edmnfoundation.org.

For more information about the NBCT program and the support network within Minnesota, go to www.educationminnesota.org/resources/National-board-certification.

THE 2017 MINNESOTA NATIONAL BOARD CERTIFIED TEACHERS (Listed by name, local and certification area)			
Gwen Anderson Education Minnesota-ROCRI <i>English as a New Language/ Early and Middle Childhood</i>	Shannon Dinneen Minneapolis Federation of Teachers <i>Exceptional Needs Specialist/Early Childhood through Young Adulthood</i>	Megan Hall St. Paul Federation of Teachers <i>Science/Adolescence and Young Adulthood</i>	Keith Steadland White Bear Lake Teachers Association <i>Science/Early Adolescence</i>
Michele Barron Foley United Educators <i>Exceptional Needs Specialist/Early Childhood through Young Adulthood</i>	Kristin Elmquist Education Minnesota - Osseo <i>Social Studies-History/Adolescence and Young Adulthood</i>	Jodi Hansen Education Minnesota – Worthington <i>Science/Adolescence and Young Adulthood</i>	Debra Thibault White Bear Lake Teachers Association <i>Literacy: Reading-Language Arts/ Early and Middle Childhood</i>
Stephen Bates White Bear Lake Teachers Association <i>Generalist/Early Childhood</i>	Clinton Fenner Minnetonka Teachers Association <i>Science/Adolescence and Young Adulthood</i>	Robert Kohnert Minneapolis Federation of Teachers <i>Social Studies-History/Adolescence and Young Adulthood</i>	Thomas Totushek St. Paul Federation of Teachers <i>Mathematics/Adolescence and Young Adulthood</i>
Susan Benjamin Education Minnesota Little Falls <i>Science/Early Adolescence</i>	Linda Hagen Mounds View Education Association <i>Literacy: Reading-Language Arts/ Early and Middle Childhood</i>	Rita Leonard White Bear Lake Teachers Association <i>Health Education/Early Adolescence through Young Adulthood</i>	Joseph Weyer Education Minnesota - Roseville <i>Mathematics/Adolescence and Young Adulthood</i>
Suzanne Cutshall Minnetonka Teachers Association <i>Exceptional Needs Specialist/Early Childhood through Young Adulthood</i>	Lisa Haider Robbinsdale Federation of Teachers <i>Science/Early Adolescence</i>	Sara Schreiner Education Minnesota - Osseo <i>World Languages/Early Adolescence through Young Adulthood</i>	

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Selection of delegates underway for 2018 Education Minnesota Representative Convention

Plans are underway for the 2018 Education Minnesota Representative Convention, taking place April 27-28 at the DoubleTree by Hilton Bloomington Minneapolis South. The work delegates will do at this year’s RC will demonstrate and celebrate our collective strength and wisdom as Education Minnesota and plan our work going forward. Make plans to represent your colleagues on issues that affect all educators by seeking a post as a delegate or alternate.

Major business for delegates includes acting

on changes to the union’s constitution and bylaws and considering any proposed amendments to the legislative positions, action items and the Education Minnesota Statements of Principles.

Delegate selection process has begun at the local union level. March 23 is the deadline for local presidents to inform Education Minnesota of those who will be delegates and alternates to the RC. The number of delegates allocated to each local and statewide affiliate is determined by the number of members. Delegates are chosen by open nominations and secret ballot

in the local or state affiliate of Education Minnesota. Interested members should contact their local president for details on how to participate.

Education Minnesota provides one standard hotel room for one night for each local sending at least one delegate and one round-trip mileage reimbursement per delegate. Local presidents have details on the financial arrangements and hotel reservations.

In addition to the formal business, delegates will be able to meet other educators involved in union work.

ABOUT THE RC

- What:**
The Education Minnesota Representative Convention, commonly called the RC, is the statewide union’s highest governing entity.
- When:**
The RC takes place annually to set policy for Education Minnesota. The 2018 RC will be April 27-28.
- Where:**
DoubleTree by Hilton Bloomington Minneapolis South
- How to participate:**
Delegate selection is underway through local unions. Locals and state affiliates choose delegates by open nomination and secret ballot. Local presidents have details about logistics for delegates. For information about the RC, go to www.educationminnesota.org and log in as a member. Choose “Representative Convention” from the “Events” menu.

Semifinalists named for Minnesota Teacher of the Year

The candidate field for this year’s Minnesota Teacher of the Year honor has been narrowed to 43.

A selection panel of business, community and education leaders chose the semifinalists from an initial field of 167 candidates from across the state.

The panel will review the semifinalists’ portfolios and additional video submissions and select about 10 finalists from among the group.

The 2017 Minnesota

Teacher of the Year, Corey Bulman, will announce his successor at a banquet May 6 at the Radisson Blu Mall of America in Bloomington.

Candidates include pre-kindergarten through 12th-grade, ECFE and Adult Basic Education teachers, from public or private schools. They must meet the program requirements and submit a portfolio to be considered for the award.

Education Minnesota, the statewide educators union,

organizes and underwrites the Teacher of the Year program.

The Minnesota Teacher of the Year Program also receives support from the following organizations: Education Minnesota ESI, Educators Lifetime Solutions, EFS Advisors, Harvard Club of Minnesota Foundation, McDonald’s Restaurants of Minnesota, Radisson Blu Mall of America, SMART Technologies and United Educators Credit Union.



Learn more about the program and selection process at www.educationminnesota.org/news/awards/teacher-of-the-year.

The semifinalists are listed with their school, district and subject area.

THE 2018 MINNESOTA TEACHER OF THE YEAR SEMIFINALISTS				
Heather Anton Southview Elementary Waconia Public Schools Elementary	Amanda Gislason McKinley Elementary Owatonna Public Schools Visual arts	Alyssa Kuhlman Burroughs Community School Minneapolis Public Schools Elementary	Jaquinetta Mitchell Osseo Senior High Osseo Area Schools English	Renee Swanson High School for Recording Arts, St. Paul Biology
Courtney Bell North Academy of Arts and Communication Minneapolis Public Schools Social studies	Scott Glew Salk Middle School Elk River Area Schools Social studies	Shirley Land Galtier Community School Saint Paul Public Schools Pre-K	Patrick Moriarty Roseville Area High School Roseville Area Schools Band	Lisa Thompson Basswood Elementary School Osseo Area Schools Elementary
Dani Berry Epsilon Intermediate District 287 Math	Laurie Halvorson Como Park Elementary Saint Paul Public Schools Elementary	Alyssa Larsen Waconia High School Waconia Public Schools Human geography, world history	Jennifer Naslund Shirley Hills Primary School Westonka Public Schools Elementary	Sheena Tisland Red Wing High School Red Wing Public Schools Language arts
Holly Bowen-Bailey Ordean East Middle School Duluth Public Schools English	Kelly Holstine Tokata Learning Center Shakopee Public Schools English	Tim Leistikow Fridley High School Fridley Public Schools English	Malia Norton Medford Elementary Medford Public Schools Elementary	Ashley Topp Blaine High School Anoka-Hennepin School District English
Eric Carlson Kelliher Public School Kelliher Public Schools Visual arts	Justin Hudalla Battle Creek Middle School Saint Paul Public Schools Global studies	Kathryn Mackin Mahtomedi Middle School Mahtomedi Public Schools Language arts	Melissa Oberg Cook County School Cook County Schools Special education	Jacob Toufar Shakopee East Junior High Shakopee Public Schools Technology education
Ethan Cherin St. Paul Central High School Saint Paul Public Schools Social studies	Angie Hurtig Bertha-Hewitt Public School Bertha-Hewitt Public Schools Elementary	Stephanie Maybee Salem Hills Elementary Inver Grove Heights Community Schools Music	Kathryn Oberg Peter Hobart Elementary St. Louis Park Public Schools Elementary education	Gregory Truso Wilshire Park Elementary St. Anthony-New Brighton School District Elementary
Elizabeth Dorsing Blaine High School Anoka-Hennepin School District Math	Molly Keenan Harding High School Saint Paul Public Schools Social studies	Shaylee McComb Weaver Elementary North St. Paul-Maplewood-Oakdale Public Schools Music	Claudia Powers Irondale High School Mounds View Public Schools Special education, EBD	Greg Ueland Roseville Area High School Roseville Area Schools Social studies
Kari Eloranta Mounds View eALC Mounds View Public Schools Language arts	Rebecca Kittelson Sunset Hill Elementary Wayzata Public Schools Elementary	Jay Meiners Lakeview High School Lakeview Public Schools Science	Sarah Ryan Century High School Rochester Public Schools Language arts	Sara Windschitl Metro Deaf School, St. Paul Elementary
	Adam Kuehnelt Minnesota Correctional Facility – Faribault English language arts	Melissa Mills Crystal Lake Education Center Lakeville Area Public Schools Early childhood special education	Bill Sucha Irondale High School Mounds View Public Schools Band	

Needs assessments key in building school improvement plans

The Every Student Succeeds Act has replaced No Child Left Behind. Minnesota’s state ESSA plan was revised and approved by the federal Department of Education and Education Secretary Betsy DeVos.

Now, educators across the state must learn about how this may impact their work. It is not immediately clear that there actually will be an impact to their work, but there is an opportunity for educators to make an impact on the plan.

The Minnesota Department of Education will begin identifying schools in the fall of 2018. Those identified schools will fall into two primary categories: targeted support schools or comprehensive support schools. While there are differences, all identified schools must conduct a comprehensive needs assessment, which will be used to select evidence-based interventions and strategies that will help develop their improvement plans. Schools will then implement those improvement plans.

If schools fail to improve or are identified again, it could lead to more rigorous interventions with MDE. Those interventions will begin

with another comprehensive needs assessment. It is a three-year cycle—one year for planning and two years of implementation.

MDE’s state ESSA plan details the following: “[s]chools and districts in the first year of identification will establish leadership teams, engage stakeholders, complete comprehensive needs assessments and root-cause analyses, identify evidence-based practices that fit and are feasible, and submit two-year school improvement plans by March 1. The remainder of the year will focus on acquiring or repurposing the resources needed to do the work ahead, operationalizing evidence-based practices, usability testing, and preparing staff for new practices.”

So, what is a comprehensive needs assessment and why should educators care?

A comprehensive needs assessment can include several surveys, focus groups or conversations that are used to gather input or data. The information and data gathered should provide a detailed picture of the strengths and needs of the students and the school community, as well as the internal and external barriers

to success.

Simply put, a need is the gap between what is and what should be—the gap between the present and the future. Seems easy, but if you are looking for useful data and valuable input, then it is essential to be asking the right questions.

One Friday in February, Education Minnesota brought together many individuals to create a comprehensive needs assessment that addresses the needs of all students no matter their race, economic background, gender, language, where they live or where they come from. It was a time of learning for everyone in the room. All the participants, including teachers, educational support professionals, housing advocates, education equity advocates, diversity and inclusion advocates, district officials coordinating after-school programming and school board members contributed.

Participants brought their expertise, their stories and their values to this work. The group started designing a student comprehensive needs assessment. However, the overall comprehensive needs assessment for a school must include input from

families, school staff, the broader school community, the business and non-profit community and the state.

Last week, I led a training on trauma-informed education and restorative practices. Educators wanted to move forward with additional professional development and school structures to implement what they were learning. They know it will make a difference for struggling students, but also the entire school community and school climate. They also know that it will help retain teachers. Trauma-informed education and restorative practices are evidence-based interventions, ones that a school could build an improvement plan around. Imagine staff, students and families completing a comprehensive needs assessment and the school discovers there is a need for doing something different around discipline procedures. The comprehensive needs assessment can be a tool to move a school to change. Change that educators want, not just administrators or politicians.

The comprehensive needs assessment will drive the improvement plans, and it will drive the evidence-based

LEGAL BRIEFS

interventions and the money to support them. But the real promise of a comprehensive needs assessment done well is not just the assessment itself, but the engagement that should come with the process.

It is a real opportunity to discover what our students, families and educators need to become more successful. It is a time to examine the nature and causes and set priorities that will bring about equity for students.

If your school is identified next fall, please look to Education Minnesota to support your work with a sample comprehensive needs assessment. In the meantime, if you are interested in contributing to the work of building a comprehensive needs assessment that will engage the entire school community, please contact Paul Winkelaar, Education Minnesota public affairs specialist, at paul.winkelaar@edmn.org.

♦ **Jess Anna Glover**
Glover is a staff attorney for Education Minnesota.

MEMBERS WANT TO KNOW

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EDUCATION MINNESOTA OPPORTUNITIES

MEMBER-LED SESSIONS WANTED FOR SUMMER SEMINAR

Education Minnesota is looking for members to submit proposals for sessions they would like to lead at the 2018 Summer Seminar.

Summer Seminar is part of the Minnesota Educator Academy and offers high-quality professional development, leadership training and networking opportunities. It will be held July 30-Aug. 1 at the College of St. Benedict in St. Joseph, Minnesota.

Members are invited to submit a session idea regarding professional practice. Potential topics could include culturally responsive teaching, curriculum and assessments, school climate and learning communities, technology integration or student engagement. Sessions run an hour-and-a-half.

Sessions led by Education Minnesota members are typically some of the most popular ones available at Summer Seminar. Here are some of the member-led sessions that filled up quickly last year:

- Empathy Translates into Success for Students and Educators
- Student-Driven Digital Portfolios
- Diversity and Cultures: Teaching and Learning through Graphic Novels and Comics
- Trauma’s Impact in the Classroom

All of us have things we excel at in the classroom—from managing student data to performance assessments to best practices in restorative justice—so please, consider sharing your skills with fellow

educators at Summer Seminar.

If selected to present, Education Minnesota will cover the cost of the presenter’s attendance at the other sessions offered during Summer Seminar, double-occupancy lodging accommodations, meals and mileage to and from St. Ben’s. That equals three days of professional development for free.

Go to <http://bit.ly/ss18-rfp> and fill in your session title, description, objectives, intended audience and more. Please submit your session idea by March 23 to be considered.

Registration to attend Summer Seminar opens May 4. Information on attending the event can be found at www.educationminnesota.org/events/summer-seminar.

ABOUT THIS PAGE

The Minnesota Educator provides opportunities listings on this page as a member service, highlighting the free and low-cost professional development the union provides. The page also lists conferences, training and resources of possible interest. Readers interested in pursuing an opportunity should check it out carefully. The Educator tries to include only legitimate, useful opportunities that support education practice.

To submit an opportunity:

- Send a complete description of your opportunity to educator@edmn.org.
- Send your item by the first Friday of the month to be considered for the next month’s Opportunities page. Include daytime contact information.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

ESP regional trainings focus on school safety

This spring, Education Minnesota is offering a free training for education support professionals called “Advocating for ESP Safety and Voice.” The trainings will be held at locations across the state. Attendees will learn about skills and strategies to advocate for safer working conditions while continuing to meet the growing and changing needs of students—focusing specifically on positioning ESPs as a critical voice in educating the whole child. Dinner will be provided and continuing education credits are available.

Find the meeting nearest you and register at www.educationminnesota.org/resources/esps/esp-regional-meetings.

Relationship-building, project-based learning opportunities from St. Paul Federation of Teachers

The St. Paul Federation of Teachers Teaching & Learning Center is offering two opportunities for educators this spring. The “Innocent Classroom Cohort” training rebuilds the relationship between educators and students, especially students of color. The training will take place on four days in March and April from 4:30-6:30 p.m. at the Minnetonka Community Center. For more information or to register, go to www.eventbrite.com/e/innocent-classroom-cohort-tickets-42428805700.

Another opportunity is the Experiential Learning Lab. This two-day session is designed for participants to experience the teaching methodology of project-based learning. The workshop will take place May 10-11 at the St. Paul Federation of Teachers office. For more information or to register, go to www.eventbrite.com/e/project-based-learning-experiential-learning-lab-tickets-41966320394.

Spring workshops, summer institute at the Historical Society

The Minnesota Historical Society is hosting four workshops in March and April for educators. “Sources and Scholars: Judge Miles Lord” will take place March 20 and is free. Attendees will explore primary sources related to Judge Miles Lord and the Minnesota judicial system. “Black Lives and Minnesota’s Past” will be held on both March 27 and March 31 and costs \$10, which includes parking. Educators will learn about three instances

in Minnesota’s past where black Minnesotans fought for equity: the Minnesota March on Washington, The Way, Inc. and the Council on Black Minnesotans. “Sources and Scholars: Sisterhood in War” will take place April 10 and is free. Participants will explore primary sources related to servicewomen and the Vietnam War.

The Historical Society is also hosting the IUM Summer Institute for Secondary Teachers June 18-21. Participants will analyze maps, photographs and other primary sources from different time periods in history. Optional housing and mileage stipends are available. Teachers who attend the full four-day institute will receive a \$300 stipend.

For more information about any of the Historical Society’s workshops, go to <http://education.mnhs.org/workshops>.

Mental health conference

The Minnesota Association for Children’s Mental Health will host its 22nd annual Child & Adolescent Mental Health Conference April 15-17 in Duluth. Classroom and special education teachers are encouraged to attend. Ninety-plus breakout workshops are scheduled on everything from treatments and strategies to mental health in the education system.

For more information or to register, go to <http://www.macmh.org/annual-child-adolescent-mental-health-conference>.

Two Ford’s Theatre summer workshops

Teachers of grades 3-12 are invited to attend the Ford’s Theatre week-long summer programs. “The Seat of War and Peace” will examine how the Civil War and Reconstruction have been remembered across time through the study of our nation’s capital’s monuments and memorials. “Civil War Washington” takes place July 8-13 and will have participants looking at the nation’s capital as President Lincoln would have known it during the Civil War. The registration fee for both sessions is \$500, which includes airfare, hotel, daily transportation and light breakfast and lunch each day.

Applications are due April 2. For more information or to apply, go to www.fords.org/for-teachers/programs.

Free elementary, science teacher summer institutes

Hamline University is offering its free Rivers Institute at two locations this summer. Rivers Institutes are designed to increase teachers’ knowledge in water related content, enhance STEM-focused investigation skills, expand literacy skills, and help area educators translate professional experiences into meaningful, engaging classroom investigations for students. The St. Croix institute is June 25-27 and the Mississippi institute is July 23-25. The focus for the institutes is on elementary and middle school classroom teachers, as well as science specialists and teams of teachers.

For detailed information and online applications, please visit www.hamline.edu/education/cgee/rivers-institute.html.

CLASSROOM RESOURCES

NEA Works4Me has practical tips for educators

The National Education Association houses tips from educators across the country on its Works4Me website. Topics include classroom ideas for new

teachers, ways to motivate older students to read, tackling long-form math problems and new apps for use in the classroom. The site allows users to search by academic subject, classroom management, educational equipment and supplies, learning activities, student skill sets and teaching method pedagogy. Educators can also sign up for a biweekly e-newsletter that includes teaching strategies and classroom resources.

To see tips or sign up for the e-newsletter, go to www.nea.org/works4me.

GRANTS AND AWARDS

Education Minnesota professional development, classroom grant applications due April 6

The Education Minnesota Foundation for Excellence in Teaching and Learning is offering its classroom, education support professional and higher education faculty professional development grants for a second time this spring, with applications due April 6. Higher education members can request up to \$3,000 and ESP and teacher members can access up to \$1,500.

For more information about the foundation or how to apply for a grant, go to www.edmnfoundation.org.

Grants available for purchasing diverse books

The NEA Foundation is awarding grants for public school libraries to be able to purchase diverse books. The Read Across America Library Grants will be awarded to public schools serving economically disadvantaged students to purchase diverse books. Schools can receive \$250 to \$1,000. The application deadline is March 30.

For more information, go to www.nea.org/grants/886.htm.

HOW TO HELP THE PARKLAND COMMUNITY, EDUCATORS, STUDENTS

In the wake of the recent shooting at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School in Florida, the National Education Association and American Federation of Teachers have set up resources for other educators to help those affected by the tragedy and provide financial and emotional support.

Educators can send a condolence message to the students, families, educators and staff of the Parkland community here: <https://actionnetwork.org/forms/supportforparkland>

The NEA, AFT, Florida Education Association and Broward Teachers Union have partnered to create a Broward relief fund to provide resources and support to the students, families, educators and staff at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School. <https://www.aft.org/broward-relief>

The FEA has put together a list of resources for supporting students through trauma, along with ways to help, including the condolences page and Broward Relief Fund. <https://feaweb.org>

The AFT has put together a webpage of resources that will be updated as the push for more legislative action continues. www.aft.org/our-community/we-care-we-fight-we-show/after-parkland-time-action-now