

Education Minnesota

Education Minnesota calls on Legislature to expand training in trauma-informed practices

For more information, contact:

[Chris Williams](#)

651-292-4816 (work)

651-247-5539 (cell)

ST. PAUL, Minnesota. Feb. 24, 2020 – A meaningful, broad-based approach to educating students with unresolved trauma must be part of the state’s strategy for reducing inequitable outcomes in education, Education Minnesota President Denise Specht said Monday.

Specht said the state’s largest union of educators strongly supports House File 3556, which would pay for trauma-informed professional development for all school staff who work with students, including principals, administrators, teachers and education support professionals.

The bill provides one-time grants worth \$40 per student to schools within districts identified by the Minnesota Department of Human Rights for having large racial disparities in student discipline.

The money may also be used for home visits to students or families who have experienced trauma. The bill calls for educators and district leadership to evaluate the results of the training using data on discipline, academics and attendance.

“The need for training all educators in trauma-informed practices is urgent and obvious to everyone who works with Minnesota students,” Specht said. “This bill will move our schools closer to providing the supports our students need, although more needs to be done.”

“While this bill isn’t enough to completely address the mental health needs of our students, it’s a concrete, measurable step forward with research to back it up,” Specht said. “There’s no reason to wait and it’s certainly a better use of the budget surplus than more tax breaks for rich people.”

Specific training has already helped educators in Duluth support students who have experienced trauma.

“Our professional development around trauma-informed practices has had a big impact on increasing student attendance and decreasing office referrals,” said Lynn Thompson, a fifth grade teacher at Piedmont Elementary School in Duluth and member of Education Minnesota. “We have only just begun our journey, and with more professional development we hope to keep this great momentum with our students.”

HF 3556 is scheduled to receive its first hearing of the session on Tuesday morning in the House Education Policy Committee.

The bill is based on a large body of research into adverse childhood experiences, or ACEs, in Minnesota and the rest of the country. The Minnesota Department of Health reports: “In childhood, persistent and intense stress stemming from ACEs actually influences how the brain develops. Toxic stress strengthens connections in the parts of the brain that are associated with fear, arousal, and emotional regulation. Additionally, toxic stress negatively impacts parts of the brain associated with learning and memory.”

For more information on ACEs, their frequency in Minnesota and their effects on developing brains, please see the resources posted by the [Minnesota Department of Health](#).

For more information on the relationship between trauma-informed teaching and racial disparities in discipline, see the report from Education Minnesota's Educator Policy Innovation Center, “[Interrupting Racism, Strengthening Communities, and Accelerating Student Learning: The Need for Restorative Practices and Trauma-Informed Schools 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.

[Contact us](#) | [Local union websites](#) | [Careers](#)

© 2021 Education Minnesota. All rights reserved.

[Terms of Use](#) | [Privacy Policy](#)