

## Education Minnesota

# Planning for back-to-school must include focus on equity, voices of classroom educators

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*ST. PAUL, Minnesota. June 18, 2020* – Education Minnesota President Denise Specht said Minnesota school districts should include classroom educators in all discussions about how to reopen schools this fall and that a focus should be on equitably making up for lost learning in the spring.

The state departments of health and education told school districts on Thursday to prepare for three modes of school in the fall – in-person, distance learning and a hybrid of remote and in-person instruction.

“When we go back to school this fall, if we’re serious about making sure every child can pursue their dreams regardless of what they look like or where they’re from, we must get serious about doing what works,” Specht said. “That means listening to classroom educators about the best ways to deliver instruction during the pandemic. It also means making sure every decision our schools make advances the cause of education equity because we know there was learning loss this spring and we’re sure it wasn’t equal among all our students. Further, studies show real learning can’t happen when students arrive hungry, or stressed about issues at home, or about their own health or the health of their families. We must get back to school safely for students and educators, and we must make sure our students get the support they need, whether they’re in our school buildings, learning from home, or some combination of the two.”

Specht said educators would be available to consult with the departments of education and health ahead of the final decisions about how school would resume in the fall, although she acknowledged the final decision would be made by the Health Department based on the latest data and models of the COVID-19 pandemic.

### 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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