

MINNESOTA EDUCATOR

AUGUST/SEPTEMBER 2020

LOCAL UNIONS BRING EDUCATOR VOICES INTO FALL PLANNING

**PD OFFERINGS NOW
ONLINE, FREE TO MEMBERS**



THE VOICE FOR PROFESSIONAL
EDUCATORS AND STUDENTS

Support for students, educators

Education Minnesota's website has been updated all summer, and will continue to be updated with resources for educators regarding educating during COVID.



Information includes:

- ▶ *FAQs on educators with health concerns, distance learning privacy and contractual rights, special education, paid leaves, unemployment and student loan debt relief.*
- ▶ *Contract bargaining resources including Q Comp guidance, reopening resources, managing workload, ESP-specific considerations and leave provisions.*
- ▶ *A summary of the state guidance and executive orders.*
- ▶ *Checklists and guidance around reopening of school buildings.*
- ▶ *Resources on educator rights and safety concerns regarding reopening of school buildings.*
- ▶ *Lesson planning links.*

Go to www.educationminnesota.org/resources/in-the-classroom/Coronavirus to find all of the resources, and watch for updates as the school year begins.



THE VOICE FOR PROFESSIONAL
EDUCATORS AND STUDENTS

August/September 2020 – Volume 23, No. 1

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Phone: 800-652-9073 or 651-227-9541

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The Minnesota Educator is published for members to share news about education issues and training opportunities for educators as well as union and political news that affects public education in Minnesota.

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COVER PHOTO: Cars lined up to rally for a safe and equitable reopening of school buildings at the end of July. The rally had educators sharing what they and their students need to feel safe going back to buildings on signs and on printed cards given to union leaders. Cars drove around Education Minnesota headquarters and the State Capitol complex.

Photo by Doug Dooher, Education Minnesota Public Affairs Specialist.

GETTING 'BACK TO NORMAL' ISN'T GOOD ENOUGH

The pandemic has thrown us into a tailspin and tossed our routines for back to school like a garden salad. More than one educator I know has said, sounding scared and tired, they just want life to go "back to normal."

Who can blame them? Some educators know how their districts will start the year; some don't. Many educators will start with distance learning; some won't. Will there be enough PPE? How will the buses work? There's question after question. And no one knows what schools will look like in November.

We're so turned around we're on the edge of forgetting something important: Normal didn't work.

Our districts were under-funded and many of us worked in dilapidated buildings. Parents expected us to educate their children so they could grow up and soar, but our profession was losing too many good people to budget cuts and exhaustion. Students who desperately needed support services weren't getting them.

Our schools were unwelcoming to many Black, brown and Indigenous students. Too many students who needed us the most were falling through the cracks. Many places were making progress on cutting the school-to-prison pipeline, but it wasn't enough.

Our communities weren't thriving equally. Inequities by race and ZIP code were

rampant in the neighborhoods our students went home to. The systemic racism in policing and health care we've seen on the front pages this summer existed long before everyone knew the name of George Floyd. Full-service community schools were changing lives, but comparatively few students had access to them.

And even before most of us had ever heard of a coronavirus, there were politicians and powerful corporate interests trying to blame and shame communities of color for all the obstacles put in their way by an economy that had been rigged for the wealthy.

No, going back to normal isn't good enough. We can do better, much better.

When we get past this crisis, if we're serious about making sure every child can pursue their dreams regardless of what they look like or where they're from, let's get serious about doing what works.

We all know real learning can't happen when kids arrive hungry or stressed out about issues at home; so, let's make sure those who need it have healthy meals, support and trusted counselors.

Educators can't give individual attention in packed classrooms; so, let's fund schools so small class sizes foster stronger relationships.

Our schools can't do any of this unless the richest 1 percent and the biggest corporations start

paying their fair share. If certain politicians don't go along, we can join together and elect new leaders who reflect the very best of every kind of Minnesotan and who will deliver the policies our families need.

So, let's use this fall to create a new normal, where public education is a top priority.

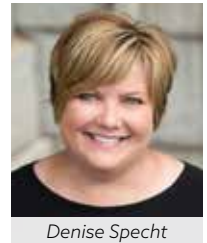
There are some people who will say the continued push for full funding is crazy during a pandemic, but I say it would be foolish to give up. The new coronavirus is magnifying the issues we've seen in our schools for years so that more people can see them. The polls say they're ready for something new.

Although many of us may feel like leaves in the wind right now, we're not powerless. We can come together for change. Organized educators have the numbers, the smarts, and the passion to lead Minnesota through the next year - not just back to the status quo but into a future that's better for everyone, both inside and outside our schools, with no exceptions.

Together,



Twitter: @DeniseSpecht



Denise Specht

MEA conference will be virtual

Education Minnesota will hold our annual MEA conference virtually this October due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The 2020 MEA conference will feature live sessions via webinar on Thursday, Oct. 15. There will also be new relicensure course offerings on Education Minnesota's online learning platform LearnUpon for members to complete at their own pace.

Details about session offerings are still in the works, but educators can look for the schedule and registration information on www.educationminnesota.org in the coming weeks.

Education Minnesota launched LearnUpon this summer. Members can access professional development to improve their professional practice, earn CEU credits for relicensure and build union understanding and power.

Courses at MEA and on LearnUpon are always free to active Education Minnesota members.

Getting social!

Educators use social media as a way to connect with their communities, colleagues and the world. We will feature posts from Education Minnesota members and locals each issue! Make sure to follow Education Minnesota on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Snapchat, YouTube and Pinterest!



Jess Davis
@MINTOY2019

MN has the largest opportunity gap in the country. If we don't start talking about how COVID is disproportionately impacting our families of color, we cannot expect to address educational inequities. Real talk.

Education Minnesota @EducationMN - Jul 12
Is it safe to reopen Minnesota schools this fall? That may depend on us. mnleg.twincities.com/2020/07/12/is-...

Where are you reading your Minnesota Educator?

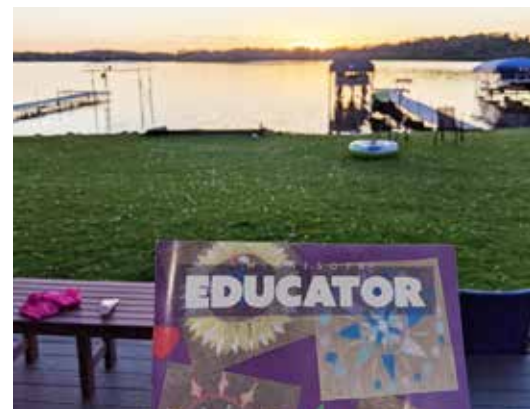
Congratulations, Jillian Kruger from Waconia, for being this issue's winning submission!

We love seeing all of the places where you are reading your Minnesota Educator! .

Email a photo to educator@edmn.org or share it on social media using #mneducator

of where you are reading your Minnesota Educator to be entered into a drawing to win a \$50 Target gift card!

Submissions are due Sept. 11. Happy reading!



Educators in the news!

Education Minnesota members are often interviewed in their local newspapers or TV station. We will feature a quote each issue!

There were miles of cars holding food, wrapped around our city blocks.

—Mara Bernick, family liaison for Sanford Middle School in Minneapolis, in a Washington Post article from June 2. The school organized a food drive for families in the aftermath of George Floyd's murder, after the uprising caused stores to be closed. The school asked for donations to make 85 food kits. By the end of the day, an estimated 30,000 food kits were delivered, and more than 500 families and individuals were able to stock their pantries and fridges.

PLANS FOR FALL BRING IMPORTANCE OF EDUCATOR VOICES TO FOREFRONT

With the state's official guidance for what education will look like this fall out, educators are now continuing to advocate for themselves and students.

Education Minnesota's officers and governing board released the following statement after the governor's announcement July 30:

Education Minnesota believes in the highest standards for returning to in-person learning. That means looking at both county and school building metrics.

Education Minnesota and our locals will work to ensure that any school, district or campus in Minnesota that is providing in-person instruction during this pandemic is prepared and able to abide by the safety standards outlined by the state, federal government and medical professionals. If those standards are not met, we will do everything we can to protect students and all the education professionals who care for and instruct those students.

Nothing is off the table when it comes to the safety and health of those we represent and those we serve. Education Minnesota will continue to bring all necessary resources to bear, including providing bargaining information, support and tools, staff assistance in developing organizing plans, supporting affiliates and individuals in legal matters, filing necessary grievances and reports to OSHA and DOLI, and working with and educating other stakeholders in advocacy for safe reopening plans – from the bargaining table to the Legislature and the courtroom – with the goal of securing safe conditions for all students, staff and faculty.

Education Minnesota believes we must invest in the recovery and redesign of our schools. There must be an investment in public health and in our schools, universities, hospitals and local and state governments. We must upend the policies and processes that have benefited some students while not prioritizing others, specifically low-income students, Black and brown students and students with disabilities.

Education Minnesota will continue to fight for the funding needed to not only safely reopen schools and campuses, but to rebuild our public education system so all students, no matter what they look like or where they come from, have access to welcoming schools where they can pursue their dreams. We don't just want to "get back" to school. We want to make the schools our students return to better.

Local unions partner with districts

Many local unions have been able to have a seat at the table in their district's plans for possible in-person, hybrid or full distance learning.

In Windom, local presidents Laura Alvstad and Kristi Maricle said they were lucky to be invited into the district discussions from the start.

"We don't start school until Sept. 14, since we have a building project, so we have time to continue to address these concerns and brainstorm solutions," said Alvstad. "We need to remember to be flexible and adaptable because this is new to all of us."

In Windom, hybrid learning means using all of their physical space and hiring more staff.

"We would use all physical spaces to spread out students and reduce class sizes," said Alvstad. "Our school board has been supportive and approved hiring additional teaching staff."

But even after Gov. Tim Walz released his guidance, Alvstad and Maricle know there are still more details to be worked out.

"We still need to work out how do we support mental health needs of students and staff, and how will we support teachers who get sick and need to be out of the building for extended time," Alvstad said.

In Edina, union president Tom Connell said the district has brought educators in at every level of decision-making.

"The district created an operational task force and an instructional design task force. They invited us in and asked who should be on the task forces," said Connell. "We brought our negotiators in. We've been negotiating the whole summer."

Connell said he has made sure to make communication a central piece of his work as a leader.

"I've been trying to send out as much information in weekly emails to hopefully ease their nerves," he said.

In Hibbing, local president Susan Nelson said not only is the district working with the union, but neighboring districts are all working together.

"The area superintendents are all talking with each other, so we don't do this and have kids move around," she said. "We all want to keep our numbers stable. We want to keep all of our plans similar."

Nelson said she asked the district if the local could be at the table, and the administration quickly agreed.

"Our superintendent wants to work within the contract and create MOUs and make sure everyone is happy and things meet the contract," she said. "We're been working hard and we've been getting paid during this time."

School nurses play key role in plans

School nurses will have a large role to play in how districts will be implementing learning this fall.

The School Nurses of Minnesota organization has been working all summer with its members to develop toolkits and guidance.

"School nurses are the public health experts for all districts and can provide leadership to coordinate the effort to reduce the risk of COVID-19 transmission," said Deb Landin, a licensed school nurse in Warroad. "It is going to take a community-wide effort to reduce this risk and staff need to have an active role in doing so."

During the building closures this spring, Gretchen Gosh, an Edina licensed school nurse, said she met as part of her student support teams every week to discuss students who were at risk for attendance, mental health, behavior, poor grades or teacher-reported concerns. She expects those

roles will continue, especially if her district does hybrid or continues distance learning this fall.

"Additionally, we support staff, students and families on public health interventions as they relate to COVID-19. We continued to connect with our medically fragile students virtually," Gosh said.

In Lakeville, Ellen Parker, a licensed school nurse, has spent the summer developing an operations manual with district leaders. She has helped take inventory of each building's nurse's office supplies and develop screening tools and protocols if any in-person learning takes place.

"I will be doing training for building nurses on symptom screenings. How are you going to monitor staff and students? How are you doing isolation?" said Parker. "We need to make sure we are monitoring attendance and making sure to keep students in academics if they are positive or needing to be quarantined."

Parker will remain the district's COVID coordinator this fall.

"I will be connecting with SNOM and pooling resources," she said. "We have been in constant contact to find out what's working and what's not."

"Whatever the model we do, we just want to make sure the kids are taken care of. They need a bridge between their health, the community and their education. Each kid needs to get what they need and the playing field is equal for all of them."

Education Minnesota staff have been working to develop legal guidance, memorandums of understanding for contracts and lesson planning resources for educators and local unions after hearing the governor's Safe Learning Plan.

All of those resources are available on www.educationminnesota.org/resources/in-the-classroom/Coronavirus.

If you have questions or concerns that aren't addressed in any of the provided resources, please reach out to your local union president or Education Minnesota field staff.

MEMBERS WORRY ABOUT REOPENING BUILDINGS, SURVEY SAYS

Education Minnesota surveyed its members via email July 16-20 about their feelings and thoughts about the best way to resume public education during the COVID-19 crisis. More than 20,500 members responded.

The most frequently chosen option was to continue distance learning with 49 percent of respondents, while 29 percent of educators preferred a hybrid of distance and in-person learning. Seventeen percent of educators supported full-time, in-person classes this fall.

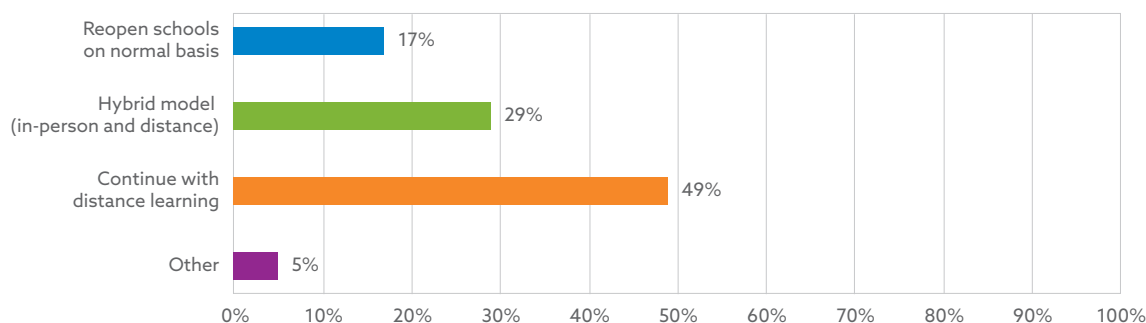
The survey makes clear the racial inequalities that run through public education are present in this decision, too. Educators of color are even more reluctant to return to in-person learning than educators as a whole, likely because of the extra risk the virus poses to Black, brown and Indigenous communities.

Nearly every educator who took the survey agreed that any return to our school buildings must include big changes to how we teach, interact with our students, keep our buildings clean and arrange our workspaces.

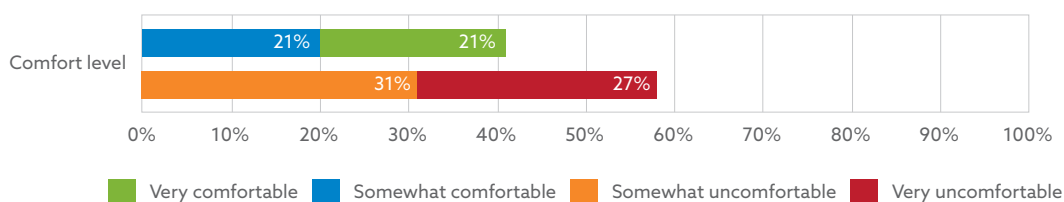
Education Minnesota shared the survey results with Gov. Tim Walz and Education Commissioner Mary Cathryn Ricker to help guide their decisions for fall.

A selection of questions and answers are shown below. For full results, go to www.educationminnesota.org/news/Survey/Survey-results.

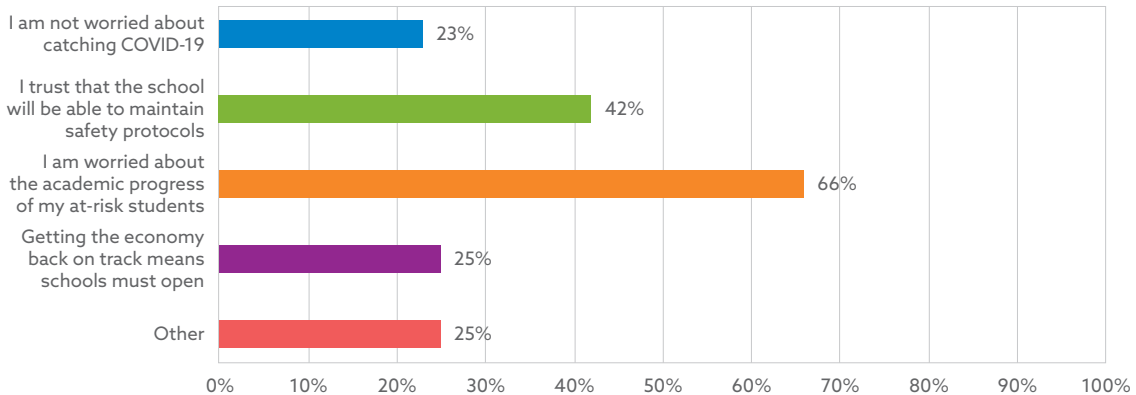
How should education take place in the fall?



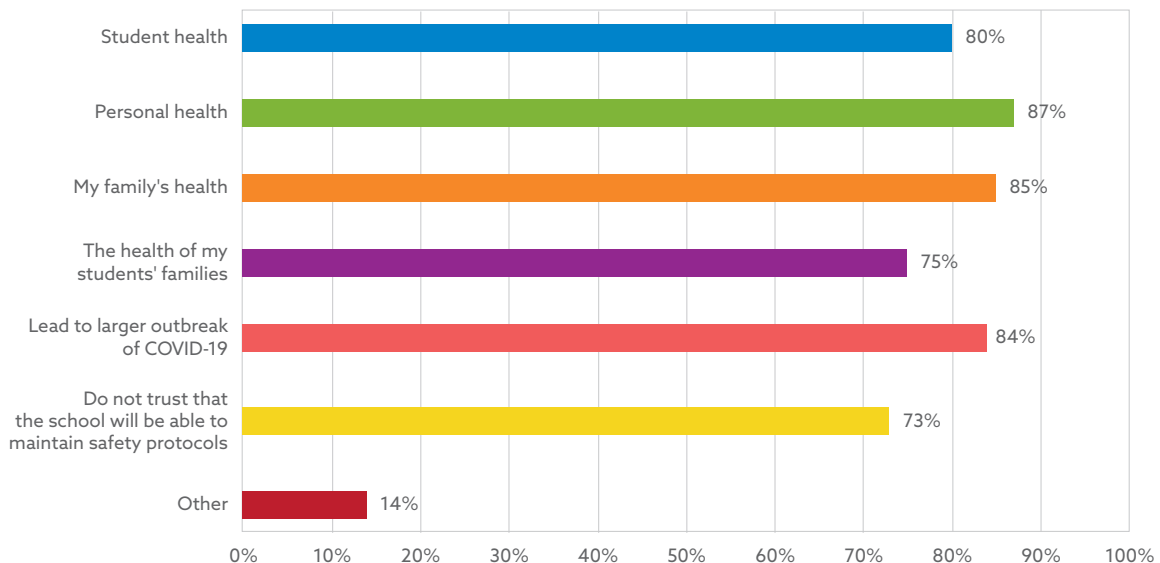
How comfortable are you in returning to school if all reopening safety standards are met?



If you are very comfortable or somewhat comfortable about returning to school, why do you feel that way? Check all that apply. (Skip if you answered somewhat uncomfortable or very uncomfortable)



If you are somewhat uncomfortable or very uncomfortable about returning to a school, what are your concerns? Check all that apply. (Skip if you answered very comfortable or somewhat comfortable)



***Full results are available at
[www.educationminnesota.org/
 news/Survey/Survey-results](http://www.educationminnesota.org/news/Survey/Survey-results).***

EDUCATION MINNESOTA CONTINUES FIGHT FOR RACIAL EQUITY

In the wake of the murder of George Floyd in Minneapolis, Education Minnesota has recommitted to its work of being a part of fighting back racism in our communities and in systems, like public education and labor unions.

"This is a horrifying, senseless death that shows once again the racism that Black, brown and Indigenous Minnesotans live with every day," President Denise Specht said the day after the murder. "We anticipate our students of color will experience trauma from this killing as they did with Philando Castile, Jamar Clark and too many other Black men who died in police custody. Educators will once again do our best to help our students through, but this must stop. We grieve for the family of Mr. Floyd today, but tomorrow it will be time to join together and rewrite the rules so everyone, with no exceptions, can thrive without fear, care for their families, have their voices heard, and their rights respected."

Cultural competency

Education Minnesota's four-part Cultural Competency training is now available to all members for free on the digital platform, LearnUpon.

In the training, participants are asked to look at equity work through the concentric circles of self, others and systems. The eight-hour training stresses the need for equity in society, the power of language to hurt and heal, and guided introspection about implicit biases. Participants leave with an action plan for improving their practice with students and their relationships with peers.

Becoming a more supportive and welcoming colleague and educator is not a cure-all for Minnesota's teacher retention problem, racial equity issues or opportunity gap — but we believe it will help. As a union, we're committed to real solutions.

Legislative action

Education Minnesota also signed on to legislation focusing on police reform and racial equity.

At the end of July, the Minnesota Legislature

adjourned its second special session of the summer, after passing police accountability legislation led by the People of Color and Indigenous (POCI) caucus.

While we are very disappointed that a number of proposals authored by the POCI caucus are not in the final legislation, this represents just a start in addressing the systemic racism in policing that has harmed Black and brown Minnesotans. Education Minnesota is committed to pushing for those necessary systems changes in future legislative sessions.

During the July special session, the Minnesota House also passed a resolution declaring racism a public health crisis. Education Minnesota was proud to sign on in support of this resolution, calling it an important first step that rightly focuses the work of the Legislature around this crisis. As a union, we take our role in helping dismantle systemic racism in our public schools seriously.

Anti-racism resources for educators:

Education Minnesota's Cultural Competency training:

<https://edmn.me/learnupon>

Education Minnesota's MEA FIRE program:

<https://edmn.me/MEAFire>

5 anti-racism resources for teachers:

<https://edmn.me/36EHUvs>

More anti-racism resources: <https://edmn.me/2AlbDxa>

5 ways to address bias in your school:

<https://edmn.me/36FaE7u>

Share My Lesson racism collection:

<https://edmn.me/3ccMjqs>

Ibram X. Kendi blog: <https://www.ibramxkendi.com>

Racial Justice in Education resource guide:

<https://edmn.me/2zDzSa5>

Teaching Tolerance: www.tolerance.org

Colorín Colorado resources: <https://edmn.me/3hCC9U3>

Teaching While White: <https://edmn.me/2Bxl0dT>

Talking about race in the classroom:

<https://edmn.me/3det6pY>

Equity & social justice websites: <https://edmn.me/2TO5bWC>

LICENSURE EXTENSIONS, CHANGES DUE TO PANDEMIC

The Minnesota Professional Educator Licensing and Standards Board and the Legislature made changes to some timelines around teacher licensure and renewal due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Education Minnesota staff have been monitoring those changes and want to keep you updated. PELSB is continuing to meet and more updates may be possible this fall.

Education Minnesota anticipates a backlog in the renewal process with the 2020 extensions, so if you are needing to apply for a new license or renew your license by December or next July, we encourage you to allow for extra processing time.

If you have specific questions about your license or renewal, please contact your Education Minnesota field staff.

Go to www.educationminnesota.org/resources/credentials-licensure for other information around the tiered licensure system and more.

Q: My license expires in 2020. Did the Legislature pass an extension?

A: Yes. The Legislature adopted a statute that extends all educator licenses set to expire in 2020 (Tier 1, Tier 2, Tier 3 and Tier 4) by six months. Those licenses are now set to expire Dec. 31, 2020.

Q: I have been unable to renew my license because I have not had the opportunity to take the new cultural competency trainings, and none are scheduled in the near future. What are my options?

A: Education Minnesota's own Cultural Competency training is now available to members online for free. The training is made up of four different modules, and members can work through the modules at their own pace. The trainings can be found on our new online platform, LearnUpon. To learn more or to get started, go to edmn.me/learnupon.

Q: My position in the fall requires a new license or a permission, such as an out-of-field permission. When should those materials be submitted to PELSB?

A: If your position depends on a new license or a permission, please submit or have your district submit the relevant application materials to PELSB as soon as possible. We expect a backlog of applications at PELSB, and getting materials in early will mitigate that problem and increase your chances of being ready to go on day one of the new school year.

Q: My license expires in 2020, and I was ready to renew months ago, but I could not finish the process either because cultural competency was not yet available to me or because my continuing education committee was unable to process renewals. Can I use the CEUs I am accumulating now for my next round of renewal in 2025?

A: No. The date on which you can start to accrue CEUs to be applied to your 2025 renewal is the date in 2020 upon which you renew. There is no way to "bank" CEUs ahead of your renewal date.

Q: I am an ESP who is doing more because of the changes to learning my district made, including doing lesson plans or other work my licensed teacher counterparts typically do. What can I do?

A: Contact your field staff. There are certain requirements in state statute and rule that outline what duties the teacher of record must perform.

FREE PD OFFERINGS MOVE ONLINE

Education Minnesota's professional development offerings are now becoming available on the platform, LearnUpon.

Education Minnesota members will be able to access free professional development to improve their professional practice and earn CEU credits for relicensure as well as build union understanding and power.

The majority of courses will be pre-recorded. Some will be offered live via webinar and some will be a combination of both.

Having the trainings online allows members from around the state to access professional development, created by educators, on their own time and at any location. The platform also allows members to be able to come and go from a course, with the platform saving your place.

To access the platform, members must use the login information that was sent by the LearnUpon system on July 1. Often these messages can go into spam or junk folders, so please check all folders to find the email from notifications@learnupon.com. If you still can't find your email invite or have any questions, please email learnupon@edmn.org.

Education Minnesota staff and members are launching new courses each week. The first courses offered were the four sections of Cultural Competency.

The courses were tested by Education Minnesota's Governing

Members must use the login information that was sent by the LearnUpon system on July 1. Often these messages can go into spam or junk folders.

Courses currently available on LearnUpon, with new courses being added each week:

- ▶ *Certified Negotiator Program for Teachers*
- ▶ *Certified Negotiator Program for Education Support Professionals Parts 1-4*
- ▶ *Cultural Competency Training Parts 1-4 (relicensure)*
- ▶ *Culturally Responsive Teaching Through a Racial Justice Lens*
- ▶ *Degrees, Not Debt*
- ▶ *English Learners (relicensure)*
- ▶ *MRA (Member Rights Advocacy) Part 1*
- ▶ *Reading (relicensure)*
- ▶ *Worksite Unity Leader Training Part 1*

More information, including a video on using the platform, is available at edmn.me/learnupon.

Board before the full launch.

Heather Bakke, a teacher in Gibbon-Fairfax-Winthrop and National Education Association Director, said she enjoyed the online training.

"The first three trainings had been in a group where there was a lot of conversation so I was worried that it would be difficult doing the course without other people but I was pleasantly surprised how the same rigor and intent went into the online course," she said. "It gave me many opportunities for reflection and helped me come

up with my equity action plan."

Being able to move Education Minnesota's professional development online is an important step, and a big benefit of union membership, said Bakke.

"Being able to meet state guidelines with courses developed by our union with the specific needs of our members in mind is so empowering," she said. "It is an amazing way to get the most out of your dues and now with the online learning system you can do PD from the comfort of your own home."

FUND TO PROVIDE SUPPORT FOR SCHOOL, CHILD CARE WORKERS

The COVID-19 crisis has disproportionately impacted Black and brown workers and families. Additionally, Black and brown workers make up an inordinate percentage of our schools' hourly school employees which includes child care workers, paraprofessionals, educators and school support staff.

The Education Minnesota Foundation for Excellence in Teaching and Learning, Education Minnesota, SEIU Local 284 and ISAIAH's Kids Count On Us Coalition created a fund to help school workers, child care workers and educators who have been laid off by their districts, under the threat of being laid off or have had to close their child care centers due to the current COVID-19 crisis.

Donations are still being accepted at <https://edmn.me/ReliefFund>.

"These educators and caregivers don't get the respect or wages they deserve during good times, and they are the first to lose pay or face layoffs during a crisis," said Education Minnesota President Denise Specht when the fund was launched. "Unfortunately, the COVID-19 pandemic and the school closures that have come along with it have threatened the economic security of tens of thousands of school employees and child care workers."

"My friends, neighbors and colleagues are dealing with two pandemics," said Kiarra Zackery, an educator and care advocate with ISAIAH's Kids Count on Us Coalition. "One is centuries old and one is new – COVID-19 and systemic racism. My community is pulling together like they never have before. You can't drive down the street without seeing pop-up food shelves and free essential supplies. But even if your pantry is full, that's not going to pay the rent or keep the lights on."

Now the fund is creating an application for school and child care workers from the three partner organizations.

Education support professionals from Education Minnesota may apply if they have been financially impacted by COVID-19, such as

loss of hours, being laid off or furloughed.

The partnership of these organizations has come from a year-long work group of educators looking at the early childhood education system in Minnesota.

"We've been looking at inequities both in access to child care and early childhood programming for parents and students, but also that the teachers aren't treated as teachers," said Rachel Johnson, a kindergarten teacher in New Prague. "Birth to age 5 is the most important for setting the foundation for learning."

Johnson and other members of the team from Education Minnesota and ISAIAH's Kids Count on Us Coalition were set to travel to other states to see their early childhood education systems operated, but the pandemic has halted that travel.

The funds that had been set aside to pay for those trips became the basis for the relief fund. The group is still working on their research paper which will be shared in the coming year.

"We knew we could be lifting up those workers," said Johnson. "They care so much for children and they do so much for our communities. They give up so much and are committed to education and our communities. There's so much uncertainty with everyone's financial situations. We want to provide a safety net if they need it."

Applications and more information on the fund is available at <https://edmn.me/ReliefFund>.

Education support professionals from Education Minnesota may apply for the School and Child Care Worker Relief Fund if they have been financially impacted by COVID-19, such as loss of hours, being laid off or furloughed.

To donate or find the application and more information, go to <https://edmn.me/ReliefFund>.

MEMBER VOICES DRIVING WORK OF UNITY CAMPAIGN

Education Minnesota's Unity Campaign is focusing on electing pro-public education candidates this fall and fighting for what our schools and all of our students, no matter what they look like or where they come from, need to achieve their dreams.

This year has proven that our world can change multiple times within a short period of time. This year has also shown the immense importance of public schools and public educators on our society and in making the systemic change we need.

This fall, while the world is still changing, we have an opportunity to fight for what we need as public educators and what our students need to succeed.

Our families and neighborhoods are stronger, safer and healthier when we come together in moments of joy and celebration, and of illness and crisis. Our public schools are more than a place where kids take tests, they are part of what ties our communities together and, during a normal year, a place where childhood happens.

For too long in Minnesota, we short-changed our public schools by letting the richest 1 percent and the big corporations pay less than their fair share. Some of our kids were forced to learn in packed classrooms, with outdated textbooks, in buildings that need repair, and it was usually kids in Black and brown neighborhoods. We spend less today on funding for public schools than we did in 2003. And the ripple effect from this crisis threatens to make things worse. We can't repeat the same mistakes of the past. When this crisis ends, Minnesota must ensure all our children have equitable, high-quality schools that enable them to realize their potential.

Education Minnesota's Unity Campaign is fighting for unbreakable solidarity within our statewide membership by March 1, 2021,



**FOR 100% VOTING
FOR FULL FUNDING OUR STUDENTS DESERVE
FOR WELCOMING SCHOOLS FOR EVERYONE**

#EDMNVOTES

for investment in our public schools that co-creates with students, families and community partners a student-centered public education system that is anti-racist, culturally sustaining and meets the needs of every student.

In 2018, we saw that educators have power at the ballot box. We need to do that again, electing pro-public education candidates this November to local, state and national offices. And then we need to use our collective voice again to hold them accountable to provide us the resources our schools need.

Educators in districts across the state are being trained as worksite unity team leaders, who will guide the work in their local unions. If you are interested in joining the campaign and connecting with your colleagues, parents and community members around this work, contact your local union president or Education Minnesota field staff.

The campaign and its goals are being led by a group of educators from across the state, as well as Education Minnesota staff, called the Unity Table.

On the next few pages, you will be introduced to these team members and hear about why they are committed to this work and being a part of the Unity Table.

Learn more about the Unity Campaign and how to get involved at www.edmnvotes.org.

MEMBERS

"I want to make sure our members have the information needed in order to move forward with bold actions. It is easy to get wrapped up in your own classrooms or locals, and let someone else do the work of advocating for our students and colleagues. I believe we will need to inform our members and to get them engaged in local activities, and then we will be able to get them engaged in statewide actions."

Kelly Wilson, teacher, Education Minnesota - OSSEO



"The time has come to fully fund public education, and we have the collective power to win it for Minnesota's students, families and communities."

Carl Soderberg, teacher, Duluth Federation of Teachers



"I have been an educator for over 25 years starting as a para, continuing as a classroom teacher and currently serving as a local president. Over the course of my career there is one thing that has been consistent, and that is the inconsistency of our public education priorities and funding at the state level. We have gained funding, we have lost funding, we have shifted funding and the impact of that cycle over time has taken a toll on classrooms all over the state. The ability for educators and support professionals to meet the needs of their students where they are at, and provide for them what they need to succeed, is a constant stress with lack of funding. Electing effective and courageous pro-public education advocates into public office is essential to guarantee the success of fully funding schools. Together we will do this!"

Stacey Vanderport, teacher, Mounds View Education Association



"A student's opportunity to succeed shouldn't be determined by their ZIP code, but that's exactly what has happened due to our state's outdated and complicated funding formula. It's not right and I'm looking forward to collaborating with educational leaders from around the state to make sure equity for all our learners becomes a reality. I also think I bring a unique perspective as a teacher from a highly successful school district that is also annually one of the lowest (if not THE lowest) funded schools in the entire state."

Jared Simpson, teacher, Education Minnesota-St. Michael-Albertville



"As Minnesotans, we make a unique promise to our kids that we will work to give them the best opportunities possible, no matter what they look like or where they come from. The Unity Table holds us accountable to that promise, saying, 'What next steps will we take to support that work?' Although we might not see it right away, many of the same struggles rural Minnesotans face are deeply shared by others across our communities. The work at the Unity Table is important to me because any successful plan for our future will rely on grounding our understanding in how poverty, race and class intersect statewide."

Paul Peltier, teacher, Fosston Education Association



"I believe in working together to get things done. I believe there is value in numbers and that together our voices are heard. As a union, we all need to remain committed, become more involved and work together to expand our values. Knowledge is power. My number one goal is to get more people involved. We have a voice in numbers! Our schools need to be fully funded, including special education, which is a rising cost in rural schools. We need to elect officials that support education."

Tracy Detloff, teacher, Education Minnesota New London-Spicer



"I want to be a part of finding the solution to helping educational assistants be treated with respect. I feel we need to be given a livable wage and afforded the opportunity to choose our own health care company that fits our budget rather than be forced to accept what the district is making us enroll in. I feel ESPs of Color need to have higher leadership roles in our local/state/national unions. I feel we need advancement opportunities in our district without losing our union status or our job. I feel we need to be afforded a voice and not be penalized for it."



Annette Davis, ESP, Robbinsdale Federation of Teachers

"I joined the Unity Table Steering Committee to be a part of the work to get our union walkout ready. The actions required to fully fund our schools and create a just and equitable school system for all of our students means educators need to use our unions in different ways than we have in the past 15 years. The good news is where educators are doing this, they are winning real improvements for their students and families."



Shaun Laden, ESP, Minneapolis Federation of Teachers and Education Support Professionals

"I am excited to work with my peers through the Unity Table project so that we can build collective awareness and power in creating learning environments in Minnesota that truly engage each and every student. I am hopeful that our work will create a network of connections and competence as we synthesize multiple experiences."



Julia Berry, teacher, Education Minnesota Local 2209 - Intermediate District 287

"I believe a reawakened labor movement, standing alongside the communities we are a part of, is the only way out of the widespread immiseration and rampant inequality that define our current moment in history. This reawakening has to be nurtured and nudged as we all relearn how to use the tools our predecessors in the labor movement throughout history have handed down to us. I'm proud to be a part of this committed group of educators and community partners who believe a better world is possible."



Matt Williams, instructor, Minnesota State College Faculty

"We must stand up to protect our students, public education and our profession! I am ready to stand beside my brothers and sisters to stand up for statewide (and nationwide) change! I have been working hard in my local to build a relationship of collaboration and partnership. I believe the Unity Table needs to take the same stance with our partners in other education advocacy groups and work together to demand change from our Legislature."



Kate Schmidt, teacher, Dakota County United Educators

"We want each member of Education Minnesota to be engaged in what we do for each other and recognize how together we can all be agents of change for our children. Building on our union and advocating for equity are the biggest ways in which I am invested in this work. As educators, we're instrumental in other people's stories every day. I want to be a part of Minnesota's story by opening new opportunities in our collective bargaining and bringing hope to everyone we impact, regardless of where they live."



Diana Ortiz-Hedges, teacher, Minnetonka Teachers Association

STAFF

"Unity Table work is important to me because I have a nephew in elementary school and a niece who will be soon. I want their teachers to be the best and the brightest. Right now, the rate of attrition in the teaching profession is increasing. More educators are leaving because the lack of funding is taking its toll personally and professionally. We need to do everything we can to attract and retain the best and the brightest to the profession; students and educators both deserve better."



Donna Leff, Mankato office field support staff

"I believe unions and public schools are two of the last places where a truly-held value of collective good is lived out each day in this country. We desperately need tangible examples of all that is possible when we do more and do it together right now. In a moment where fully funding schools is also about food and housing security and community health, the work we do in this campaign and at the Unity Table is, to me, a true and real effort to work toward a different future where we put us before I. I am so excited about making that real."



Andrea Cecconi, negotiations specialist

"Every person working in education, whether that work is done in a classroom, a lunchroom or in a union office, has had a unique experience. Because of this, it is important that Education Minnesota bring together a variety of perspectives when embarking on the ambitious fight for full funding. All of our members' and students' voices need to be heard and considered throughout this campaign. I am hopeful that the Unity Table will help discover and share those voices."



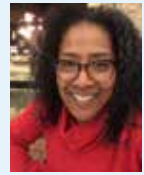
Vanessa Pulkrabek, Bemidji office field staff

"It is important to have a diversity of voices in the room. While it is easier to make decisions in isolation, what is best for the organization at large is to have thoughtful discussion with multiple perspectives."



Bridget Moore, organizing specialist

"I am a strong believer in organized labor as a vehicle through which workers (and yes, educators are workers) are humanized and able to obtain the respect they deserve. As a person of color, I view the union structure, if implemented using an anti-racist lens, to be an essential way we can create a workplace that attends to intersectional issues of labor practices and racial and gender equity to the benefit of all students. This work, of holding table together, of co-creating a campaign that can change the face of public education for the students of Minnesota, is the most important work of this time and place. As an educator who committed many years of my life to union leadership, I could not imagine not being part of it. I am grateful to be here."



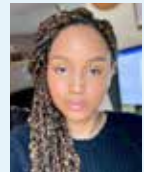
Kimberly Colbert, racial equity organizer

"I believe schools have been underfunded for years. I believe public schools are the foundation of a democracy. I cannot pass up an opportunity to help every student receive the education they deserves."



Aaron VanMoorlehem, Apple Valley office field staff

"The Unity Table will provide an opportunity to learn and understand what full funding of schools means to every educator around the state, taking that understanding and moving forward with empathy and unity toward a goal that education is a necessity for purposeful and prosperous students. I'm excited for the chance to hear and learn from educators who face difficult challenges with basic rights like equity, mental health and safety in the classroom. As a parent of young children, I know advocating for the basic needs of educators is a necessity. I'm excited to start this work and make full funding of schools in Minnesota a reality."



Ilissa Morrow, field services executive assistant

EDUCATION MINNESOTA LEADERSHIP

"We are in the middle of a health crisis, a racial crisis and an economic crisis. Public education is at the center of all three. I cannot think of a more critical time for uniting around fully funding for just schools than now. I could not be more proud of the commitment of the leaders on the Unity Table and the efforts of all our worksite unity leaders across this state!"

Denise Specht, president, Education Minnesota



"In being a part of the Unity Table, I am most excited about first, the people who I am fortunate to sit with. A mix of members, staff and leadership, these are the people who are working together, building a visionary path around the very important work Education Minnesota must do around social justice, equity and school funding. These are the requirements we need to focus the conversation for what public education must be moving forward in Minnesota. I am proud of our purpose and the conversations we have had in virtual spaces!"

Bernie Burnham, vice president, Education Minnesota



"The work of the Unity Table brings together all the voices of our organization to focus on making needed changes to public education. The collective thoughts and discussions with everyone serving on the Unity Table energizes me to see even more clearly the needs of our current students and the reasons we need to advocate for the changes that will provide them with the best education possible. I look forward to the work and sharing it with our members to build the power necessary to bring about real changes to public education."

Rodney Rowe, secretary-treasurer, Education Minnesota



"Learning and leading is what the Unity Table is all about—and that's what I find exciting! Bring together smart and strong leaders from around the state. Connect them with skilled and motivated staff from a variety of departments. Then ask them to guide the campaign and bring others along with us. It's a simple idea with the potential for great power."

Sara Gjerdrum, executive director, Education Minnesota



EDUCATION MINNESOTA ENDORSED CANDIDATES

Education Minnesota screening teams have recommended the following candidates for election, as of July 30. More endorsements will be available at www.educationminnesota.org before Election Day, which also includes information on our endorsement and local screening processes.

** indicates current or former Education Minnesota member*

+ indicates other union member

President

Joe Biden

U.S. Senate

Tina Smith

U.S. House of Representatives

CD1: Dan Feehan

CD2: Angie Craig

CD3: Dean Phillips

CD4: Betty McCollum

CD5: Ilhan Omar

CD7: Collin Peterson

Minnesota House

1A: Connie Lindstrom

2A: Jeremiah Liend

2B: David Suby

3A: Rob Ecklund

4A: Chuck Hendrickson

5A: John Persell

5B: Joe Abeyta

6B: Dave Lislegard

7A: Jennifer Schultz *

7B: Liz Olson

8A: Brittney Johnson

8B: Carol Wenner

9A: Alex Hering

9B: Laura Wright

10A: Dale Menk

10B: Gaylene Spolarich

11A: Mike Sundin +

11B: Jack Frechette

12A: Murray Smart *

13B: Benjamin Carollo

14A: Tamara Calhoun +

14B: Dan Wolgamott

15A: Calvin Schmock

15B: Ron Thiessen

16A: Doria Drost

16B: Mindy Kimmel

17A: Ben Dolan +

17B: Logan Kortgard

18A: Dean Urdahl *

18B: Heather Bakke *

19A: Jeff Brand

19B: Luke Frederick

20A: Erina Prom

20B: Todd Lippert

21A: Matt Bruns *

21B: Elise Diesslin

23A: Patricia Fahey Bacon

23B: Leroy McClelland

25A: Kim Hicks +

25B: Liz Boldon

26A: Tina Liebling

26B: Randy Brock

27A: Thomas Martinez

27B: Jeanne Poppe *

28A: Gene Pelowski

28B: Greg Davids

29A: Renee Cardarelle +

29B: Joe Rosh *

30A: Chad Hobot

30B: Brad Kovach

32A: Renae Berg

32B: Katie Malchow

33A: Caitlin Cahill

33B: Kelly Morrison

34A: Brian Raines

34B: Kristin Bahner

35A: Mike Erickson

35B: Jason Ruffalo

36A: Zack Stephenson

36B: Melissa Hortman

37A: Erin Koegel

37B: Amir Malik

38B: Ami Wazlawik

39B: Shelly Christensen

40A: Michael Nelson

41A: Connie Bernardy

41B: Sandra Feist

42A: Kelly Moller

42B: Jamie Becker-Finn

43B: Leon Lillie

44A: Ginny Klevorn

45A: Cedrick Frazier

45B: Mike Freiberg

46A: Ryan Winkler

46B: Cheryl Youakim *

47A: Arlan Brinkmeier

47B: Daniel Kessler

48A: Laurie Pryor

48B: Carlie Kotyza-
Witthuhn

49A: Heather Edelson

49B: Steve Elkins

50A: Michael Howard

50B: Andrew Carlson

51A: Sandra Masin

51B: Liz Reyer

52A: Rick Hanson

53B: Steve Sandell

54A: Anne Claflin

54B: Kelsey Waits

55A: Brad Tabke

55B: Andrea Nelsen

56A: Jessica Hanson

56B: Kaela Berg

57A: Robert Bierman +

57B: John Huot

58A: Erin Preese *

58B: Sara Wolf +

66A: Alice Hausman

Minnesota Senate

1: Reed Perkins

2: Alan Roy

4: Kent Eken

5: Rita Albrecht

6: David Tomassoni

7: Jen McEwen

8: Michele Anderson

9: A. John Peters

10: Steve Samuelson

11: Michelle Lee

12: Jill Abahsain

14: Aric Putnam

15: Brent Krist

17: Fernando Alvarado

18: Chad Tschimperle

19: Nick Frentz

20: Jon Olson

21: Ralph Kaehler

22: Shawna Marshall

24: Roger Steinkamp +

25: Sara Flick

26: Aleta Borrud

27: Dan Sparks

28: Sarah Kruger

29: Chris Brazelton

30: Diane Nguyen

32: Joshua Fike

34: Bonnie Westlin

36: John Hoffman

37: Jerry Newton

38: Justin Stofferahn

39: Josiah Hill *

40: Chris Eaton

41: Mary Kunesch-Podein *

42: Jason Isaacson *

43: Charles Wiger +

45: Ann Rest

46: Ron Latz

47: Addie Miller

48: Steve Cwodzinski *

49: Melisa López Franzen

50: Melissa Wiklund

51: Jim Carlson

52: Matt Klein

53: Susan Kent

54: Karla Bigham

55: Sahra Odowa

56: Lindsey Port

57: Gregory Clausen

58: Matt Little



Welcome Back!



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Political Action Committee Refund Request

Thousands of members of Education Minnesota decide to contribute to the union's political action committee. The PAC is one of our main tools to bring the educator voice to the policy debate by electing people who will listen. Those PAC dollars are used to win local levies and to back candidates and organizations that support lower class sizes, high standards and professional educators.

In accordance with Education Minnesota Bylaw Article 2, Section 3, Subd. b, I hereby request the following:

____ Please refund to me \$25 of my contribution to Education Minnesota's dues that will be contributed to the general account of Education Minnesota Political Action Committee for the 2020-21 academic year.

**ALL OF THE FOLLOWING FIELDS ARE
REQUIRED. PLEASE PRINT LEGIBLY.**

Name: _____

Last 4 digits of SS#: _____

Address: _____

City, State, ZIP: _____

Local/Affiliate: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

A request for refund of the Education Minnesota Political Action Committee contribution will not affect membership rights or benefits. Retired members are not assessed, thus do not qualify for the refund.

DEADLINE FOR REFUNDS:

Refund requests MUST be received by the Education Minnesota Political Action fund:

- 1) By Oct. 31 for continuing members; or
- 2) Within 30 days of signing a membership application for new members.

**CHECKS WILL NOT BE MAILED UNTIL
THE END OF NOVEMBER, AFTER ALL
FORMS HAVE BEEN PROCESSED.**

ORIGINAL SIGNATURE NEEDED.

Return this form to:
Education Minnesota Accounting Department
Attn: Refund Request
41 Sherburne Ave.
St. Paul, MN 55103-2196

Education Minnesota Foundation for Excellence in Teaching and Learning Refund Request

Contributions to this foundation will provide financial support for innovative programs initiated by Education Minnesota members, locals and affiliates that promote educational access for learners and excellence in teaching. Grants also support professional development for education support professionals and higher education faculty.

In accordance with Education Minnesota Bylaw Article 2, Section 3, Subd. c, I hereby request the following:

____ Please refund to me \$ ____ (maximum \$5) of my Education Minnesota foundation assessment that will be contributed to the Education Minnesota Foundation for Excellence in Teaching and Learning for the 2020-21 academic year.

**ALL OF THE FOLLOWING FIELDS ARE
REQUIRED. PLEASE PRINT LEGIBLY.**

Name: _____

Last 4 digits of SS#: _____

Address: _____

City, State, ZIP: _____

Local/Affiliate: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

A request for refund of the Education Minnesota Foundation for Excellence in Teaching and Learning assessment will not affect Education Minnesota membership rights or benefits but will make you ineligible to receive a grant from this foundation. Retired members are not assessed, thus do not qualify for the refund.

DEADLINE FOR REFUNDS:

Refund requests must be received by the Education Minnesota Foundation for Excellence in Teaching and Learning:

- 1) By Oct. 31 for continuing members; or
- 2) Within 30 days of signing a membership application for new members.

**CHECKS WILL NOT BE MAILED UNTIL
THE END OF NOVEMBER, AFTER ALL
FORMS HAVE BEEN PROCESSED.**

ORIGINAL SIGNATURE NEEDED.

Return this form to:
Education Minnesota Accounting Department
Attn: Refund Request
41 Sherburne Ave.
St. Paul, MN 55103-2196

2020-21 EDUCATION MINNESOTA FOUNDATION GRANT DEADLINES

The Education Minnesota Foundation for Excellence in Teaching and Learning has multiple grants with a deadline approaching. For details about the grants and how to apply, go to www.edmnfoundation.org. There's a grant waiting for you!

Professional Development Grants for teachers, ESPs and higher education faculty

Awarded twice a year, ESPs and teachers may request up to \$1,500, and higher education faculty may request up to \$3,000.

A Professional Development Grant can also be used for groups to either attend professional development or be trained at their worksite.

Deadlines: Nov. 6 and April 2

National Board Certified Teachers Scholarship

Members can receive \$500 per component, up to \$1,000 total. **Deadline: Nov. 6**

Classroom-Focused Grants

Applicants may request up to \$3,000. **Deadline: Dec. 4**

Bruce Vento Science Educator Grant

For educators who teach science as part of their day and want to acquire and share new skills and knowledge; this grant may also fund equipment or materials needed in science classrooms. **Deadline: Dec. 4**

Second-Year Classroom Grants

Applicants may request up to \$3,000. **Deadline: April 2**

IMPACT Grant

IMPACT Grant projects must be coordinated by an active member of Education Minnesota who has teamed up with a nonprofit organization or their local union/school district. Approximately \$15,000 is available for one year. The budget should reflect a one-year project. **Deadline: Jan. 8**

IMPACT Grant, second year

Funding is available for IMPACT projects wanting to continue into a second year. **Deadline: April 2**

LOCAL RACES CAN HAVE MAJOR IMPACTS ON SCHOOLS THIS FALL

Education Minnesota can help your local union create a campaign plan to win your levy or school board election this fall and in the future.

Of the November 2019 levies that the union helped support, 92 percent passed at least one question, and all of the locals that received assistance from Education Minnesota elected a majority of their endorsed school board candidates.

Education Minnesota can help your local with:

- Working with other organizations, like the AFL-CIO Area Labor Councils and other unions.
- Data, such as targeted voter lists and phone banking lists.
- Equipment, like laptops, cellphones and calling minutes.
- Design and printing of materials.

FINANCIAL RESOURCES

Education Minnesota's Political Action Committee makes funds available to locals for use in campaigns. To be eligible, a percentage of a local's members must be contributing to the PAC.

Need help? Contact Jim Meyer, jim.meyer@edmn.org for levies and referendums or Anna Brelje, anna.brelje@edmn.org, for school board races.

MEMBERS WANT TO KNOW

Common identity theft schemes during the pandemic



Uncertainty is a prime time for increased activities like identity theft. Be on the lookout for these common scams.

- Streaming services redirects - The COVID-19 pandemic and its resulting lockdown left people with a lot more time on their hands at home. One way people are filling this time is with video streaming services. But this binge-watching comes with security risks, as cyber-criminals look to take advantage of the uptick in television viewing. An email security vendor recently revealed that it had detected the registration of over 700 suspicious domains designed to impersonate the Netflix brand in under a week.
- Email phishing scams - Enhanced email phishing scams attempting to steal sensitive information. If you do not know the sender or something about the email seems suspicious, authenticate with the sender before clicking on any links.
- Texting scams - Texting scams spike during a time of crisis. Always verify the organization sending you a text is legitimate before you click a link, send money or verify personal information.
- Tax scams – While it's typical to see a spike in tax-related fraud during tax season, it can also magnify during times of crisis. Keep your information secure and ask your tax professional about their security protocols.

If you are currently an active teacher or education support professional, you are eligible for a complimentary Essential Recovery identity theft plan courtesy of Education Minnesota ESI Member Benefits.

Visit www.educationminnesota.securusid.com for details. Other members including student and retired qualify for special negotiated rates.

41 Sherburne Ave., St. Paul, MN 55103 651-292-4856 800-642-4624
esi.educationminnesota.org esi@edmn.org

Paid for by ESI, not by dues. ESI is self-supporting; revenues provide benefits, service and consumer education for members. What do YOU want to know? Send questions to esi@edmn.org.





THE VOICE FOR PROFESSIONAL
EDUCATORS AND STUDENTS

Education Minnesota
41 Sherburne Ave.
St. Paul, MN 55103

Nominations open for the 2020-21 ESP of the Year

Nominations are open until Sept. 27 for the next Education Minnesota Education Support Professional of the Year.

The program honors exemplary professional and union work by an Education Minnesota member in any ESP job category, including paraprofessional/education assistant, secretarial/clerical, custodial, food service, maintenance and trades, transportation, grounds keeping, security, technology services, health services and others.

All Education Minnesota ESP members who have been members for at least three years as of Aug. 31, 2020 are eligible. Individuals can be nominated by anyone associated with Minnesota schools.

The ESP of the Year represents peers throughout the profession and connects to communities as an ambassador, and is Minnesota's nominee for the National Education Association's ESP of the Year award.

The ESP of the Year receives a \$1,200 honorarium, their choice of an iPad, Chromebook or tablet, plus an expense paid trip to the NEA's Education Support Professional National Conference

To nominate a candidate for 2020-21 Education Minnesota ESP of the Year, go to www.educationminnesota.org/resources/esps/esp-of-the-year-nomination-form.

MINNESOTA
ESP
OF THE YEAR