Almost 500 educators came to the Education Minnesota Political Conference last month, which kicked off our 2018 campaign work with a new focus on member engagement and activism. “Remember this date: It’s the start of our movement to reclaim the Capitol,” said Education Minnesota President Denise Specht during a speech at the conference. Specht and other speakers shared stories about why the 2018 election is so important for the future of public education and our union. Up for election in 2018, will be a new governor, both U.S. Senate seats and all seats in the state House of Representatives. The conference featured a gubernatorial candidate forum with six DFL and two independent candidates for Minnesota governor. Members submitted questions for the candidates when they registered for the conference; at the MEA conference in October and on social media. Education Minnesota collected the responses and created questions that represented the most popular and relevant topics. Members from around the state were chosen to ask the questions. Candidates were asked about educator salaries, recruitment and retention, student loan debt, mental health services and more and much more. The forum was the first step in Education Minnesota’s endorsement process for governor. Electing pro-public education candidates is important now more than ever to help make sure educators are successful in their work, which means students are successful in their lives, said Education Minnesota-Lakeville teacher and Education Minnesota Political Action Committee (PAC) member Leah Hood. “Students cannot get what they need if their educators can’t get what they need. The two are inextricably intertwined,” Hood said. Education Minnesota is focusing on new ways of reaching out to members about the importance of the 2018 election. The new efforts will include: Worksite political action leaders More than 33,000 educators did not vote in the last gubernatorial election in 2014. Education Minnesota wants to change that by focusing on a more personal engagement with members. Worksite leaders will be having one-on-one conversations with their colleagues about the education, union and_PKTbook issues they care about and how those issues can be a motivating factor in voting in 2018. Digital engagement Members identified as digital engagement leaders will be given training and tools to effectively use social media platforms to increase member voting, civic participation and political action. One of those tools is called Hustle, a peer-to-peer mobile texting app. Digital engagement leaders will be using Hustle to recruit campaign volunteers within their locals and engage drop-off member voters next fall. Another tool, Voter Circle, is a web-based platform that allows users to send personalized emails and messages to friends in their contact lists about certain political candidates and/or issues. Live video and targeted social media ads are other ways Education Minnesota and local leaders will be engaging drop-off voters this election cycle. WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU! Read the special section on the importance of keeping strong unions in Minnesota. Then answer the question, “What is the most important thing you value in your union membership?” 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 the hashtag Education Minnesota. Answers will be run in next month’s Minnesota Educator. Congratulations to last month’s contest winner, Chelsea Bower of St. Cloud. INSIDE THIS ISSUE... This issue features a special section dedicated to why unions matter. Public education and public-sector unions are under attack in states throughout this country, and at the national level. Education Minnesota wants our members to understand why these attacks are happening and the importance of keeping our union strong. President Denise Specht reflects on the union’s role in protecting members who want to speak out, especially women speaking out against harassment in the workplace. Members share their stories about working in non-union schools, both in Wisconsin after Act 10 and at a charter school in Minnesota. Keeping strong unions is important for the Minnesota economy and our state’s quality of life. See comparisons of our state to right-to-work states throughout the country. Wisconsin is now seeing the effects of the Act 10 legislation on the public education system and state economy. Unions in Iowa saw their Legislature pass a law stripping them of their collective bargaining rights in just a few days. Elections matter, page 8
Unions are good for women, especially now

All women should be encouraged to respond to sexual harassment without putting their careers at risk. Unions can help protect their friends, their colleagues, and they can form a collective bargaining unit to address issues of harassment in the workplace. The benefits of these unions extend to teachers who work with students from diverse backgrounds and to students who benefit from having teachers who are well known. The benefits of these unions also extend to women who work in E-12 schools and, as 17,000 men who work in E-12 schools and so far, these unions have handled one case of harassment or bullying perfectly. The labor movement itself isn’t blameless. However, I do believe organized work also helps to create better workplaces for women. In the future, state and federal agencies will enforce the laws already on the books. Harassment scandals in the statehouse, Congress and those surrounding the president do not reassure educators about the future of those laws. The budget deficits facing the state and nation will affect enforcement agencies. If the choice is between relying on federal government departments and compromised politicians, or an empowered state and a member rights committee, we'll take the local control every time.

Finally, I'll share one more story from my own career as a result in running a newspaper. A few women into the future of those laws. We could find a new teacher during the current shortage. The common response to concerns about losing contractual and legal protections from discrimination and harassment are assurances that state and federal agencies will enforce the laws already on the books. Harassment scandals in the statehouse, Congress and those surrounding the president do not reassure educators about the future of those laws. The budget deficits facing the state and nation will affect enforcement agencies. If the choice is between relying on federal government departments and compromised politicians, or an empowered state and a member rights committee, we'll take the local control every time.

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Unions Matter

Why our union matters now more than ever

Elected leaders at the national and state level have made it clear they want to weaken unions, the voice of working people and public education.

Why do they want to chip away at the effectiveness of unions? Because educators and other public workers are powerful and can affect change when we have a collective voice.

Minnesota educators enjoy better pay and pensions than educators in many other states because previous generations of educators fought for them. Teachers in so-called right-to-work states earn $7,609 less on average than Minnesota teachers.

The power of educators to advocate for their profession and their students increases when each individual who chooses to work in union toward shared goals, but it wears thin when even one educator opts out.

Those who want to weaken unions want more power in the political process. Unions have fought for the rights of all Minnesotans, and we still have the responsibility to help alleviate the racism, discrimination and income inequality that hurt our students and their families.

The voices of the anti-union movement have become louder and stronger in recent years, and anti-union laws have hit our neighboring states of Wisconsin and Iowa.

If an anti-union governor is elected in 2018, Minnesota will almost undoubtedly be next to see this legislation.

That is why Education Minnesota launched our “Power of We” campaign to make sure our union stays strong.

The focus of the “Power of We” is to:

- Make sure that all members value their union.
- If they do not, we need to understand why and start improving.
- Make sure members unite to show administration, students, communities and each other that we are committed to working together to improve public education by renewing our commitment to the union with a new membership renewal form.
- Another threat is coming in the next few months, when the U.S. Supreme Court will hear a case regarding the constitutionality of public sector unions’ right to collect fair share or agency fees from nonmembers in a case known as Janus v. AFSCME Council 31.

The issue being discussed in Janus is whether, under the Supreme Court’s ruling in Abood v. Detroit Board of Education the First Amendment permits a public employer to charge a fair share fee to employees who choose not to become members of a labor union, but are still represented by the bargaining unit. The fee is to help cover the union’s costs of collective bargaining and grievance administration that are provided to those nonmembers.

The plaintiff, an Illinois state worker named Mark Janus, is arguing that it violates his rights to have to part of his paycheck to a union whose mission he doesn’t support.

The court will most likely hear oral arguments in the case in February and the decision could come sometime between the end of March and the end of June.

Any decision that affects a union’s ability to collect fair share fees will in all likelihood require immediate compliance.

More information on the Janus case and other efforts to attack our union and public education, can be found at www.educationminnesota.org/advocacy.

We worked without a union

Act 10 was the legislation that stripped away the collective bargaining rights of unions of public employees in Wisconsin. Gov. Scott Walker and the Wisconsin Legislature passed the law in the fall of 2011—my third year of teaching. Everyone in education immediately felt it.

I had due process protection, or tenure, for two weeks. I went from a $0 copay on my insurance to having a $2,000 deductible, to having a $4,000 deductible. My administrators cut my prep time in half, so I had to rush to set up experiments. Sometimes we just skipped labs altogether. That’s no way to teach science.

I remember our negotiated contract became a handbook. The politicians told us we were now “free agents.” They said, “Go negotiate your own compensation!” But when I asked my superintendent what he could do for me, he said, “Nothing.”

The law and the big-money ad campaign that went with it completely decimated morale in my district. We felt like we were being blamed for everyone else’s problems. When they take your dignity, teaching isn’t fun anymore. As teachers retired, the districts wouldn’t hire anyone to replace them. The duties and workload increased for the rest of us.

It all hurt students in the end. I don’t think anyone even tries being blamed for everyone else’s problems. When they take your dignity, teaching isn’t fun anymore. As teachers retired, the districts wouldn’t hire anyone to replace them. The duties and workload increased for the rest of us.

I still only made $36,000 per year. After six years of performing very well, consistently, on quarterly evaluations using the Charlotte Danielson rubric, after earning a master’s degree and serving for three years as department head, I only made around $30,000 per year for my first few years and my health insurance covered only me—it did not and would not ever cover more than me—not my spouse, not any children we might have in the future, regardless of how long I worked there.

I didn’t even have a license to teach vocal music. I realized as I advanced in my career that charter schools are devalued—and it has no intention of changing.

I want to be very clear here that the people I worked with at the charter school were wonderful. I loved what I taught, I loved my students and I loved my colleagues. In my view, we were a group of excellent educators working within and beginning to see the advantage of a by a bad system.

We had no salary schedule when I started. Teacher pay was all over the board and compensation was awarded in a haphazard manner with no real reason behind differences in pay between teachers.

I wasn’t rewarded for my years of experience. I wasn’t rewarded for my level of education. I wasn’t rewarded for my evaluation scores.

I only made around $30,000 per year for my first few years and my health insurance covered only me—it did not and would not ever cover more than me—not my spouse, not any children we might have in the future, regardless of how long I worked there.

I had no 403(b) and no matching contributions from the school.

After six years of performing very well, consistently, on quarterly evaluations using the Charlotte Danielson rubric, after earning a master’s degree and serving for three years as department head, I still only made $36,000 per year.

For years, we had no clear job descriptions. I ended up being told to write a weekly K-8 newsletter for the entire school, plan all the field trips for the whole K-8 school, do lunch duty and after-school duty. They even had me teach a choir one day a week for awhile because the part-time choir teacher was a yoga instructor who couldn’t make it to school on Fridays. I do not have a license to teach vocal music.

I tried to invest in the charter school to be a part of positive change, but it is a system that is designed to allow administration to have all the power and that allows teachers to be devalued—and it has no intention of changing.

I realized as I advanced in my career that charter schools are not aligned with my personal or professional values and that I didn’t want to be a part of one anymore. I have now been at ISD 194 for four years and I have been happier and healthier since day one.

Leah Hood, social studies teacher, Lakeville Public Schools

Marty Momsen

Marty Momsen, science teacher, Houston Public Schools

I spent the first six years of my teaching career at a public charter school. We had no union, no contract; we were all employees.

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– Marty Momsen, science teacher, Houston Public Schools

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Why strong unions are important to Minnesota

Working in union gives educators the power to make meaningful improvements for students, our profession, public education and our communities.

But corporate interests want to destabilize unions through so-called right-to-work legislation at the national and state levels because we are the last line of defense for the middle class.

Kentucky, Missouri and Iowa just this year passed major legislation to erode union power and workers’ rights. There are also a slew of cases in the queue for the U.S. Supreme Court that will likely make right-to-work style laws the lay of the land for public employees.

This is also why it is important that we elect a pro-public education and pro-labor union governor in Minnesota in 2018.

By many measures, quality of life is worse in states with right-to-work laws. Wages are lower and people are less likely to have health insurance and the necessary resources for a quality education.

Here’s a look at how Minnesota compares to 25 states that already have right-to-work laws on the books:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Measure</th>
<th>Minnesota</th>
<th>RTW state average</th>
<th># of RTW states MN outperforms</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Life expectancy</td>
<td>81.1</td>
<td>77.96</td>
<td>25 of 25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Infant mortality (per 1,000 live births)</td>
<td>5.10</td>
<td>6.54</td>
<td>22 of 25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poverty rate</td>
<td>10.20 percent</td>
<td>15.26 percent</td>
<td>25 of 25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children under 6 living in poverty</td>
<td>8.0 percent</td>
<td>19.97 percent</td>
<td>25 of 25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adults over 65 living in poverty</td>
<td>7.50 percent</td>
<td>9.24 percent</td>
<td>20 of 25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Share of population with high school diploma</td>
<td>92.40 percent</td>
<td>87.36 percent</td>
<td>25 of 25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Share of population with college degree</td>
<td>33.70 percent</td>
<td>26.28 percent</td>
<td>24 of 25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal per-capita income</td>
<td>$50,541</td>
<td>$43,213</td>
<td>22 of 25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children without health insurance</td>
<td>4.50 percent</td>
<td>6.14 percent</td>
<td>19 of 25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Share of population without health insurance</td>
<td>5.20 percent</td>
<td>11.42 percent</td>
<td>25 of 25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unemployment rate</td>
<td>3.80 percent</td>
<td>4.97 percent</td>
<td>20 of 25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average teacher salaries</td>
<td>$56,910</td>
<td>$49,358</td>
<td>23 of 25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Per-pupil educational expenditures</td>
<td>$11,510</td>
<td>$9,879</td>
<td>22 of 25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SAT score (adjusted by participation rates)</td>
<td>1107</td>
<td>1055</td>
<td>25 of 25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ACT performance (adjusted by participation rates)</td>
<td>23.04</td>
<td>21.30</td>
<td>25 of 25</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: there are now 28 “right-to-work” states. RTW legislation was enacted in Michigan in 2012 and Kentucky and Missouri in 2017. These states are not included among RTW states in this analysis because research suggests the impacts of anti-union legislation are not felt for several years following its passage. Most data from this report is from 2015 and 2016.
This could happen here, and it would affect our profession

It has been six years since the Wisconsin Legislature passed Act 10, the law that eliminated collective bargaining rights for most public-sector workers.

But for many years, the Iowa State Senate acted as a goalie for public education and public-sector workers. The collective bargaining law in Iowa had been in place for 40 years. It was taken away in just a matter of days.

The Center for American Progress (CAP) recently released a report looking at the impact of the law and how it has changed education and the economy in Wisconsin.

"Those concerned about the quality of public education—and of all public services—should understand that Wisconsin’s Act 10 and associated budget cuts have not had the positive impact on education that its proponents claimed it would,," the CAP report states.

According to the report, the authors’ analysis using data collected by the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction ( DPI) finds that, since the passage of Act 10, teachers have received far lower compensation; turnover rates have increased; and teacher experience has dropped significantly.

The harms from Act 10 extend beyond public-sector workers. All Wisconsinites, as the report suggests, have been negatively affected by the law as well. Rather than encouraging the best and brightest students to become teachers and to remain in the field throughout their career, the law appears to have had the opposite effect by devaluing teaching and driving many teachers out of Wisconsin’s public schools.

Here’s what happened after Act 10 passed:

- Teacher compensation plummeted. Median compensation for Wisconsin teachers dropped $10,483—or 12.6 percent—within four years. Most of that came from hits to retirement and health insurance contributions.
- Employees started to pay half of their retirement contributions.
- A minimum employee contribution for health care was also set for districts that use the state health plan. Gov. Scott Walker is also trying to force a minimum health insurance contribution for all school employees.
- More teachers left the profession. About 10.5 percent left after the 2010-11 school year, up from 6.4 percent in the year before Act 10 was implemented.
- Wealthier school districts poached experienced teachers from poorer districts. Interdistrict moves more than doubled.

Act 10 and related tax cuts for the wealthiest and corporations did not spark the economic boon promised for all Wisconsinites by Gov. Walker.

- Wisconsin’s private-sector employment grew by 9.4 percent from January 2011 to June 2017. Private-sector jobs in Minnesota and the nation grew by 12.2 percent and 14.2 percent respectively during that same time period.
- Wisconsin’s median household saw a 6.8 percent increase in real income from 2010 to 2016, while the median Minnesota household saw its income grow by 7.5 percent.

For many years, the Iowa State Senate acted as a goalie for public education and unions, stopping any legislation that would strip bargaining rights or harm the education system.

But the 2016 elections brought a new reality to the state, with Republicans taking control of the Senate, as well as keeping control in the state House and governor’s office.

And when the Legislature convened in January 2017, the new majority set its sights on public education and public employees.

The collective bargaining law in Iowa had been in place for 40 years. It was taken away in just a matter of days.

"This isn’t union-busting. (This bill) goes further. It’s profession-busting," said Tammy Wawro, president of the Iowa State Education Association, during the bill’s debate. "(Iowa legislators) have carved out the heart of what is important and vital to our profession and our ability to have a voice in the direction of our work environment."

The new law limits most public-sector union contract negotiations to only base wages.

Unions are now banned from negotiating with their employers over issues such as health insurance, evaluation procedures, staff reduction and leaves of absence for political purposes.

The law also says that unions cannot have union dues deducted from public employees’ paychecks.

Rules about negotiation impasses were also changed, requiring an arbitrator to consider the employer’s ability to finance any wage increase. It also puts a cap on how much an arbitrator can raise wages. The wage increase could not exceed whichever is lower: 3 percent, or a percent equal to the cost of living increase outlined in the consumer price index.

Unions must recertify every time they face a new contract negotiation—typically every two or three years. And to recertify, unions need a majority of all union members, regardless of the number of people who cast a vote.

"The Iowa Legislature didn’t just change the terms of our bargaining agreement, they changed Iowa forever," said Wawro, during her speech at the 2017 Education Progress (CAP) recently released a report looking at the impact of the law and how it has changed education and the economy in Wisconsin.

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"This isn’t union-busting. (This bill) goes further. It’s profession-busting," said Tammy Wawro, president of the Iowa State Education Association, during the bill’s debate. "(Iowa legislators) have carved out the heart of what is important and vital to our profession and our ability to have a voice in the direction of our work environment."

The new law limits most public-sector union contract negotiations to only base wages.

Unions are now banned from negotiating with their employers over issues such as health insurance, evaluation procedures, staff reduction and leaves of absence for political purposes.

The law also says that unions cannot have union dues deducted from public employees’ paychecks.

Rules about negotiation impasses were also changed, requiring an arbitrator to consider the employer’s ability to finance any wage increase. It also puts a cap on how much an arbitrator can raise wages. The wage increase could not exceed whichever is lower: 3 percent, or a percent equal to the cost of living increase outlined in the consumer price index.

Unions must recertify every time they face a new contract negotiation—typically every two or three years. And to recertify, unions need a majority of all union members, regardless of the number of people who cast a vote.

"The Iowa Legislature didn’t just change the terms of our bargaining agreement, they changed Iowa forever," said Wawro, during her speech at the 2017 Education Progress (CAP) recently released a report looking at the impact of the law and how it has changed education and the economy in Wisconsin.

"Those concerned about the quality of public education—and of all public services—should understand that Wisconsin’s Act 10 and associated budget cuts have not had the positive impact on education that its proponents claimed it would," the CAP report states.

According to the report, the authors’ analysis using data collected by the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction ( DPI) finds that, since the passage of Act 10, teachers have received far lower compensation; turnover rates have increased; and teacher experience has dropped significantly.

The harms from Act 10 extend beyond public-sector workers. All Wisconsinites, as the report suggests, have been negatively affected by the law as well. Rather than encouraging the best and brightest students to become teachers and to remain in the field throughout their career, the law appears to have had the opposite effect by devaluing teaching and driving many teachers out of Wisconsin’s public schools.

Here’s what happened after Act 10 passed:

- Teacher compensation plummeted. Median compensation for Wisconsin teachers dropped $10,483—or 12.6 percent—within four years. Most of that came from hits to retirement and health insurance contributions.
- Employees started to pay half of their retirement contributions.
- A minimum employee contribution for health care was also set for districts that use the state health plan. Gov. Scott Walker is also trying to force a minimum health insurance contribution for all school employees.
- More teachers left the profession. About 10.5 percent left after the 2010-11 school year, up from 6.4 percent in the year before Act 10 was implemented.
- Wealthier school districts poached experienced teachers from poorer districts. Interdistrict moves more than doubled.

Act 10 and related tax cuts for the wealthiest and corporations did not spark the economic boon promised for all Wisconsinites by Gov. Walker.

- Wisconsin’s private-sector employment grew by 9.4 percent from January 2011 to June 2017. Private-sector jobs in Minnesota and the nation grew by 12.2 percent and 14.2 percent respectively during that same time period.
- Wisconsin’s median household saw a 6.8 percent increase in real income from 2010 to 2016, while the median Minnesota household saw its income grow by 7.5 percent.
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EDUCATION MINNESOTA OPPORTUNITIES

SECOND ANNUAL RACE EQUITY EDCAMP TO BE HELD JAN. 13

Education Minnesota will once again host an EdCamp, an all-day, organic, participant-driven event on race and equity sponsored by our Minnesota Educator Academy. EdCamp Equity Minnesota will take place Saturday, Jan. 13, from 8:30 a.m. to 3 p.m. at Fridley High School, 6000 W. Moore Lake Drive NE, Fridley. EdCamps are professional development experiences, sometimes referred to as “unconferences.” Organizers set the schedule for the day but all sessions are determined by participants on the day of the event.

Everyone is welcome to propose and lead a session where conversation and collaboration are paramount. Anyone interested in racial equity in education is welcome to attend. The event is free and open to the public. Lunch will be provided.

Pre-registration is required. Go to www.educationminnesota.org/resources/minnesota-educator-academy/race-equity-EdCamp to sign up.

If you’d like to bring a Race Equity EdCamp to your region, please contact Jen Kahan at jen.kahan@edmn.org.

STUDENT OPPORTUNITIES

National civics essay, video contests

The Federal Bar Association is holding its second annual national civics essay contest posing the question: “What Does Equal Protection Mean to Students?” The contest reflects on the 150th anniversary of the 14th Amendment. This year’s essay contest holds a requirement of 500 to 1,000 words for submissions from high school students. Video submissions should run from three to five minutes. Students in 9th through 12th grade are invited to participate. Submissions are open through Feb. 28.

For more information about the contest and how to submit essays and videos, go to www.fedbar.org/Civics18.

Girls Who Code summer workshops

Girls Who Code, the national nonprofit dedicated to closing the gender gap in technology, will be bringing workshops to the Minneapolis area this summer. The workshops will focus on a new program, Campus, which offers curriculum in a condensed two-week summer program. Campus programs help middle and high school girls of all abilities build their future in tech, get an edge for college and connect with girls with similar interests.

For more information and to see the dates and locations in Minnesota, go to https://girlswhocode.com/Campus.

GRANTS AND SCHOLARSHIPS

State arts board learning grant

Arts Learning is a grant program that offers funding for projects that help lifelong learners acquire knowledge, understanding and skills in the arts. Projects must provide participatory learning and engage learners with skilled teaching artists and high-quality artistic experiences. For the purpose of this program, arts learning happens when participants are engaged in creating, performing and responding to art in a disciplined and intentional way with a teaching artist.

The Arts Board is offering a free online information session about the 2019 Arts Learning grant opportunity on Thursday, Jan. 18 at 3 p.m. Proposed projects must take place between Sept. 1, 2018 and Aug. 31, 2019. The deadline to submit applications is Feb. 16.

To learn more, visit the Arts Board website at www.arts.state.mn.us.

DIGITAL RESOURCES

Digital literacy curriculum

Teaching Tolerance presents a digital literacy initiative based on a framework that identifies competencies students need to be both responsible consumers and producers of online content. The most tech-savvy educators may not realize the complexity of how digital media (and the limitations of the human brain) shape our abilities to critically evaluate online information. “Learning the Landscape of Digital Literacy,” the publication that accompanies the Digital Literacy Framework, provides this context—a 101 on the obstacles separating us from a safe, civil and informed online experience.

For more information or to see the full curriculum, go to www.tolerance.org/magazine/presenting-teaching-tolerances-digital-literacy-framework.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Peacekeeping circle facilitation workshop

The St. Paul Federation of Teachers Teaching & Learning Center is hosting a three-day training on deepening peacekeeping circle facilitation skills. The training will focus on circles for conflict, difficult conversations and complex situations. Topics will include awareness of self in relationship to circle keeping; preparation for conflict circles; designing effective questions; strategies for finding consensus; responses to difficult challenges in circle; using multiple modalities in circle; self-care; interests of the group. Basic training in facilitating circles or experience as a circle facilitator is required.

The training will take place Jan. 9-11 at the St. Paul Federation of Teachers office. The registration fee is $250. Please contact Becky McCammon at becky@edmn.org.

Exploring race, racism and equity webinars

Education Minnesota’s ConnectED community is hosting a series of webinars exploring race, racism and equity in education. Every other month, we will highlight an online community of professionals from across the country who are participating in the National Education Association platform, myNEA.360.org. Join other educators to learn, share and discuss ways you can address the racism, grow your understanding of equity and connect with other educators across the country. Register for one or all the free webinars. All webinars will be held 7-8 p.m.

For more information or to register, go to www.eventbrite.com/es/exploring-race-racism-equity-in-education-tickets-38893817455.

EDUCATION MINNESOTA OPPORTUNITIES

Elections matter from page 1

Early voting

Minnesotans can vote starting Sept. 21. Education Minnesota will be encouraging members to use this as an organizing activity, to host early voting events at their worksite and for higher education members to organize early voting on their campuses for students and staff.

NextGen EdMn engagement

Voters under 35 vote less frequently in midterm elections. The NextGen EdMn group will be offering peer-to-peer organizing tools for every local and campus chapter to plan social and family activities to encourage voting and political action.

Endorsement process

Education Minnesota is also changing how its endorsement process is conducted. To be considered for Education Minnesota’s endorsement for governor, candidates must have the following:

- Participate in the political conference candidate forum.
- Spend a full- or half-day shadowing educators at work.
- Engage in a pocketbook and community issues roundtable conversation with educators.
- Complete a candidate questionnaire, created by educators, that will be shared publicly, and
- Participate in a screening interview with the Education Minnesota PAC board.

Reports of these activities will be shared on Education Minnesota’s website and social media accounts.

To start the endorsement process, the PAC will also be doing something new. Each member of the PAC will be having at least 10 one-on-one conversations with members they represent who have been identified as drop-off voters, primary election voters, ESPs, student members and members of their organization.

These one-on-one will be happening in February and March.

If members are interested in learning more about the new campaign activism programs, the trainings offered at the political conference are available to be presented in local unions or intermediate sessions.

The political conference is also being held in Bemidji in February.

To find out who represents you on the PAC, to learn more about the 2018 campaign planning or to find information about additional conferences, go to www.educationminnesota.org/advocacy/politicalaction/Political-Action-Committee.

SAVE THE DATE!

The 2018 precinct caucuses for all parties will take place Monday, Feb. 6. More information on how to share pro-public education and pro-union resolutions will be in next month’s Minnesota Educator.