



CAPSULE Kramer Brown I.O.

May 2020



ADDRESS

677 Anne St NW
Suite E
Bemidji MN 56601



EMAIL

kramerbrown10@gmail.com



WEBSITE

<https://educationminnesota.org/KramerBrownIO>

Watch Education Minnesota's social media channels, website for updates on COVID-19 responses

Education Minnesota is working hard to update and support its members during the COVID-19 pandemic. Members and the public can look to our website and social media channels for the latest education news, as well as FAQs, legislative updates and also good news happening.

Website: www.educationminnesota.org

Facebook: www.facebook.com/EducationMinnesota

Twitter: <https://twitter.com/EducationMN>

Pinterest: www.pinterest.com/educationmn

Instagram: www.instagram.com/educationminnesota

YouTube: www.youtube.com/user/EducationMinnesota

COVID-19 FAQs for educators available on Education Minnesota's website

Education Minnesota is producing FAQs every week about what is happening in schools, the latest guidance from the governor and Minnesota Department of Education and answering the questions our members are submitting to their field staff.

Current FAQs include:

- Coaching, Q Comp and other stipends
- Distance learning privacy and contractual issues [Updated: 4-11-20]
- Educators with health concerns [Updated: 4-15-20]
- Legislative and administrative responses
- Local elections
- Paid sick and child care leave expansion
- School-based child care [Updated: 4-16-20]
- School closures and working from home
- Special education
- "Stay at home" and distance learning orders
- Student loan debt relief
- Unemployment

Go to <https://educationminnesota.org/resources/in-the-classroom/Coronavirus> to see the FAQs and watch for updates.

Distance learning resources available on Education Minnesota's website, Facebook page

Education Minnesota is compiling resources and best practices for distance learning, as our state's response to COVID-19 continues.

Our website has numerous offerings, including:

- Bargaining resources, including Q Comp & TDE guidance (must be logged in to view)
- Equity in distance learning
- Financial help and other member benefits
- Involving ESPs in distance learning
- Learning & Teaching During COVID-19 EdMN Facebook group
- Online learning, PD resources
- Supporting Asian/Pacific Islander communities

We also have a student art contest happening! Go to <https://educationminnesota.org/news/minnesota-educator/2019-20/04-20/13-Student-art-contest> to learn more.

Currently, all Education Minnesota professional development is canceled through April -- with the possibility of future cancellations after that -- due to COVID-19.

Go to <https://educationminnesota.org/resources/in-the-classroom/Coronavirus> to see more from each category and to see any updates, especially around professional development and future online offerings. Updates will also be posted on all of Education Minnesota's social media channels.

Message from Avis Kennel, Kramer Brown/Vice Chairman, Warroad



As I ponder where to start with writing an article for the Capsule, my thoughts bounce all over the place as we are experiencing something in education that none of us has ever dealt with. I am retiring at the end of this school year and would have never thought I would be going through something like a pandemic. My teaching experiences have included the opportunity to work for several different school districts and educational programs through my 33 year teaching career. These include: Inter County Community Council, Plummer Public School-now RLCC, Grygla Public School, Thief River Falls Public Schools, and finally Warroad Public School for the final journey of my teaching career. Each of these teaching experiences have given me valuable professional and personable memories to last a life time. I have had the opportunity to be able to work with all age groups throughout the years. My teaching career began by working with 3 and 4 year old children in a Head Start Program through Inter County Community Council. Because I had some special education training and a Pre-K Special Education Teaching License, this opened the door for the rest of my teaching career. At Plummer I

worked as an Elementary Special Education Teacher. Although I was only with this district for one year, this was a very special experience for me as Plummer School is where I attended school and graduated from as a “Plummer Cardinal.” Being back in that building made the beginning of my career extra special. From Plummer, I went to Grygla, where a new experience awaited me, teaching grades 7-12 Special Education students. However, I not only worked with Special Education students and Title I students on a daily basis, administration gave me the opportunity to start a Peer Helper Program for the entire district that still is in place today. I bring this up, because this program relates to building relationships and positive culture and climate of a school district in which I will come back to in this article. My teaching experience at Grygla also gave me many more pieces of the educational process. I was a junior high volleyball coach, cheerleading coach, class advisor, peer helper advisor, and because I had that Pre-K licensure, again I was able to work with the Pre-School population as an ECFE teacher. After spending 22 years with the Grygla Public school system, I chose to expand my teaching experiences. I spent my next 5 years working for the Thief River Falls Public Schools, again in the area of Special Education. I was a Middle School EBD teacher at Franklin Middle School for 2 years and then my Pre-K Special Education licensure invited me to go over to Challenger Elementary and Preschool in Thief River Falls for 3 more years, working in the area of Early Childhood Special Education.

Then as retirement was getting closer, and the fact that my husband and I had a cabin in Warroad, Mn, another door opened. A home on the Warroad River was for sale and this inspired both my husband and I to purchase this home and move to Warroad. With that move and needing one more year to meet the rule of 90, I applied at the Warroad Public School and was offered a Special Education teaching position in the area of EBD at the high school level, grades 7-12. After working in this position for one year, I could have retired. However, a special student crossed my path and inspired me to make a commitment to this student that I would continue teaching until he graduated. This commitment also gave me another exciting piece to my teaching experience. Not only was I able to work with this student through the completion of his education and help him receive a high school diploma, but also because of the renovations at Warroad High School, I was given one of the best working environments I have ever had in my career, a brand new renovated classroom planned exclusively for EBD students.

So here we are now, my student has graduated, I should be retiring. Well, I was just not quite ready, I needed one more year.

This last year, again involved another change. Because I have a PreK Special Education license, I was given the opportunity to spend my final year of teaching in the new Warroad Early Learners Center as a Pre-K Special Education teacher. I will be the first to say that shifting my own personal mindset back to early learners from the high school level brought challenges. However, as I come to the end of my teaching career, like most educators, I was able to work through those challenges and close in on what has been a very rewarding ride. Then along came this

pandemic, resulting in another challenge, how do you provide special education services to 3 and 4 years old children through distance learning in an effect manner? As I approach the end of my ride as an educator, the storm may or may not be over. There will be challenges now and challenges in the future. But as educators, we find a way to defeat the storms and the challenges they may bring. We work hard to do what is best for our students.

As I look back on this fabulous ride I have been on the past 33 years, it has been and always will not be about the challenges I have faced, but about all the relationships I have built. I once had an administrator tell me, Avis it is about the relationships one builds that matters. I have kept that concept close to my heart for many years. It is about the relationships, because without healthy working relationships, you have nothing. I am so blessed to have had the opportunity to build life long relationships with students, families, colleagues, administrators, special education directors, school board members, community members, and numerous union members from the local, state, and national level.

So as I get very near to my retirement date, and am attempting each day to be as creative as I can in providing distance learning to my students, I continue to embrace the importance of building relationships. Our students and their families need us now more than ever. The daily phone calls, google hangouts, zoom meetings, video conferencing, or whatever one is using these days, gives all of us the opportunity to build relationships more so now than ever. This storm will pass, but the relationships we build today will last forever.

Thank you to all of the many colleagues I have had the opportunity to work with over the years. This includes all school staff members at each of the schools I have worked at, Kramer Brown Board members, local, state, and national members, students, and families, I am truly blessed to have had such a wonderful career. The miles between my starting teaching position to where I am retiring, is only 100 miles, however the miles of memories I take with me cannot be measured. Thank you to everyone who has crossed my path. I wish the best to all of my colleagues.

THE MAX FOUNDATION & THE MENTAL HEALTH OF OUR TEENS by: Rose McDonald - Warroad Public Schools



THE MAX FACTOR

jumped 56 percent between 2007 and 2017 (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention). IT IS 2020, and we've done little as a country to address the mental health issues of our youth. Some schools have even had to make cuts in the positions of behavioral specialists, social workers, school psychologists and school counselors because of a lack of funding at the state level. The frightening thing about this is that teens will continue to live in agony if we don't do something. In 2019, only 45 percent of teen females and 33 percent of teen males experiencing depression reached out for help. In the top five causes of death in teens, suicide comes in third (CDC 2020). These are a frightening statistics. Although the answers are far from easy, in my small community, something is being done to help teens with mental health issues in a significant way! Enter the MAX FOUNDATION. This foundation has been set up to educate and help teens struggling with mental health issues. Because of generous contributions of donors and a significant effort by the founders, the foundation is off to a wonderful beginning. The MAX FOUNDATION'S inception came in 2019. The overall premise of the program is to lift the stigma of mental health issues and encourage youth to seek help. It also provides youth with meaningful education and is geared to spare families the pain of losing loved-ones to suicide. Max Marvin was a young man who took his life at the tender age of 19. To those left behind, he had everything to live for - a tremendously supportive family, a family owned business he thrived in, many friends, and a grin that could light up any room. Unknown to those around him, however, he was suffering silently with an illness few can detect. Project 11, in cooperation with the MAX FOUNDATION, has been

instituted in Warroad Schools for the 2019-2020 school year. Project 11 provides curriculum and training for all school students from K-12. It is a program that focuses on mental wellness but specifically the social-emotional wellness of youth. The project was inspired by a former Winnipeg Jets and Manitoba Moose player, Rick Rypien, who left us way too soon. With the MAX FOUNDATION in place, it is the hope of all those involved that lives will be saved and students will be more inclined to reach out for mental health help and support. TOGETHER we can make a difference. The MAX FOUNDATION is a major first step in the ongoing fight to save our youth from the tragedy of suicide. For a more in depth look at this newly created foundation, please go to www.maxmarvinfoundation.org.



2019-2020 Kramer Brown IO Chair Mara Gust, Greenbush-Middle River, Board Chair

Hello teachers and Happy Spring!

I am writing this from my bedroom, my makeshift home office during this crazy time. Like most of you, I've been teaching from home--delivering instruction via my computer. Also like you, I've struggled with how to do this, balance my family life, and stay home.

Although this is not how we planned this spring, I am amazed. I've seen our educators take this challenge head on and plow their own path in uncharted territory. I've seen students grow in how they manage their time, work independently, and excel in new, creative projects. Something else I've observed that I hadn't predicted: our unions are stronger than ever. Across the state and country, unions are helping workers to be healthy, safe and successful. As a local president, I have been part of several webinars and conference calls with Education Minnesota where support is shared, strategies are provided, and questions are answered. We are truly all in this together.

On April 25 I attended the first ever virtual Education Minnesota Representative Convention. It was condensed and no-frills, but we delegates were able to communicate, share opinions and vote on changes to the constitution and bylaws. Union work doesn't stop with a pandemic.

The Kramer-Brown IO Governing Board continues to communicate and try to fulfill our goals as best we can. Many of you know that we have postponed our May recognition dinner for retirees, teachers of the year, and friends of education. We hope to have this event--or some form of it--later in the summer.

Although fall seems very far away, please save the date for the annual Fall Drive-In! It is scheduled for Wednesday, October 7 at Marshall County Central school in Newfolden. This is an opportunity for free networking and professional development for our members!

As always, if you have questions or comments, please reach out to me or your local governing board representative. I wish you all a safe and healthy spring and summer. And I hope to see you back in your classrooms in September

From the Field: Kevin Young, Field Staff Engagement Politically Is More Important Now Than Ever

Well, where to start? In the last 30 plus days our lives have changed dramatically. Whether it be events with family, not going to work and working from home, or simply going to the grocery store and filling the car with gas, our lives have greatly changed. This has definitely been a crazy time for all of us. First, I would like to say how proud I and the rest of the Education Minnesota staff are of all our members and other public school district employees. The work you have done has been tremendous. The lift is heavy and you have stepped up beyond imagine to get the job done. We hear of situations in other states where educating students did not go well and the decision was to just end the school year. Not in Minnesota. This is due to the countless hours teachers have worked to deliver the best education possible under these unusual circumstance. Although not under ideal conditions, the job of educating students continues in our state. This speaks volumes to the work you do every day. You should be proud of what you have done and continue to do every day. You may not hear it, but I have no doubt your community appreciates the work you are doing. Myself, I cannot imagine the work you have done and want to say I appreciate it very much.

Throughout the past few weeks I am sure you have noticed how political the entire situation has become. As always, educating students is a big part of the political arena. I want you to know Education Minnesota staff have spent countless hours working on your behalf to address the situations, many of them political, that have risen because of COVID19. Whether it be the safety of staff and students, to districts following master agreements, licensure issues, or pay for employees, Education Minnesota staff have been doing there very best to support you and answer all of your questions. With that said, it is more important than ever to make sure your voice is heard. We need to make sure all members realize importance of being engaged in the political process. Since the COVID19 situation, politics is playing a bigger role in all of our lives. To have any hope of being successful in gaining improvements for public education in the future we must participate in the political process. We need member involvement to ensure those running for public office hear from those who live in the classroom every day. Your input is needed in determining who is endorsed and who is ultimately elected. In the near future the Bemidji Field Office will be sending out information

regarding the screening of candidates who plan to run for election in November of 2020. Members determine who will be endorsed by Education Minnesota. This is your opportunity to get involved, inform potential legislatures, and be engaged in the process. I encourage all of you to take part. The screening of candidates will be virtually this year, allowing everyone to participate from home. The hope is to make this as easy as we can for you during this challenging time.

If you have not received it yet, you will soon receive a communication from the Bemidji Field Office regarding political screenings. Getting good results from elections is one of the most important things your union does to ensure that public education thrives in Minnesota. Please do not just delete or throw away our communications because you “don’t like politics.” The future of our profession is ALWAYS in the hands of politicians. It is important we continue to work hard to ensure we keep what we have worked so hard to achieve and continue progressing into the future.

Over the next few weeks and months, The Education Minnesota PAC will make formal endorsements of candidates. They will be posted on the Education Minnesota web site. Once the information is available I will be sending local leaders the information to share with all members. The most important thing you can do is get involved. Whether you make a financial contribution to a candidate, volunteer to help a candidate’s campaign or help at an Education Minnesota sponsored event, getting involved is not difficult at all.

We also would like to know if you have any local levy campaigns or school board races you want supported. Education Minnesota can help you in the process of passing a levy or endorsing various school board candidates. Please do not hesitate to let me know if you have any such local races. We want to help.

We continually hear, Elections Matter. Well, it is true. It is time to think about the future. Like it or not, politics rule our public education world. We all need to take engaged in the process. Please get involved!!!!

As always, please do your best to be involved in YOUR Local. TOGETHER we can do so much. I would like all of you to know that I am here to help you in any way I can. Whether you have questions regarding your contract, negotiations, TD&E, ACA, elections or any other item, please send an e-mail or give me a call. I can be contacted at the Education Minnesota Bemidji Field Office at 1-218-751-5957 or 1-800-622-4971. My e-mail address is kevin.young@edmn.org.